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# AMSTRAD PCW

ISSUE 23 • AUGUST 1988 • £1.50

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# OPENING MENU

**OPENING MENU**

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# cp software

NEW

## CLOCK CHESS 88

CLOCK CHESS 88 is the **strongest** and **most versatile** chess program yet for your PCW computer. It has the most advanced 3D graphics, the widest range of options, the power to play incredibly fast and the intelligence to selectively search deep into the position.
CLOCK CHESS 88 has been tested against a wide range of other chess programs and has shown itself to be stronger than any of them.

Written using the latest techniques CLOCK CHESS 88 does not use the usual "brute force" method of searching for the best move, but instead is packed with chess knowledge which uniquely allows it to search only those moves which are "sensible" or "interesting" and not to waste time analysing lines of play which it regards as "trivial". In addition, it has a variable search depth which results in a deeper search of active lines, thus reaching those parts that other chess programs cannot.

- massive 44,000 byte, user extendable, openings library
- stunning 3-D graphics
- annihilates other PCW chess programs
- largest range of options, cursor controlled for easy move input
- special easy mode for beginners
- full display of its thought processes gives you a fascinating insight into its search mechanism
- perfect understanding of all the rules of chess including underpromotion, draw by repetition and the fifty move rule
- achieves all the standard mates including those occuring with minor pieces in the endgame - well able to handle difficult pawn endings
- makes full use of the extra memory of the 256K and 512K PCW

*"CLOCK CHESS 88 is a lively and interesting opponent. An aggressive program that keeps you on your toes .... it dices up Colossus Chess nicely"* Mike Basman, UK Chess Champion.

CLOCK CHESS 88 IS COMPATIBLE WITH ALL PCWs £15.95

NEW

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BACKGAMMON is a fast moving board game where the players use their wits to play strategies making the best use of chance from the throw of the dice. Great graphics. For newcomers there are rules and tips for play.
*Easy to learn, but hard to beat !*

BACKGAMMON IS COMPATIBLE WITH ALL PCWs £15.95

all you ever wanted to know *PLUS* about GRAPHICS, THE UNIVERSE AND EVERYTHING FOR PCW but were afraid to ask

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** ALL YOU EVER..* as used by Real Time Software to write STARGLIDER*

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## BRIDGE PLAYER 2000 WITH TUTOR

This is THE BRIDGE PLAYER for both the expert and beginner, with versatile bidding and powerful card play.

Generates random hands and allows bidding in the ACOL system, using Stayman, Blackwood and a choice of No-trump conventions.
Integral Tutor section with twenty set hands, advice and detailed explanation.
Massive range of options and comprehensive information displays.

**The program is very well thought through ... here's your chance to keep your hand in using Player mode.... The Tutor teaches you the game as you play ... you get a full page of text analysing the whole game, explaining the bidding process and sequence of play.*
*In the Player mode there's a wide range of options which ensure you can learn something new each time... The display is fine, you play your round with lots of info about the last trick and the score displayed around the edge of the screen.... This is a very thoughtful way to get the most out of Bridge on the computer..... Bridge Player 2000 is a good one!* PC Plus.
*"Large and simply explained Tutorial, easy for beginners, could easily keep a Bridge player occupied for the rest of eternity"* 8000 Plus

BRIDGE PLAYER 2000 IS COMPATIBLE WITH ALL PCWS £15 .95

NEW

## *LIGHTNING* BASIC

70+ NEW BASIC KEYWORDS AND 100% PCW COMPATIBILITY, THE ULTIMATE PCW MALLARD BASIC EXTENSION.
First ever program able to trap Mallard Basic's command list. Produces devastating graphical output with fast smooth sprites for the games programmer and icons for more professional software. We guarantee you will astound yourself with your capacity for creativity using this amazing software.

Many original features provide the ideal environment for the Basic programmer.
- high and medium resolution graphics, plots, lines, circles, fills
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- User Definable Graphics, new character sets
- new editing facilities, variable list, search etc.
- save screens and instant multi-screen recall
- full A4 screen dump to dot matrix printer
- timer, sound routines etc. etc.
- easy cursor and printer control
- all functions use simple-to-use BASIC keywords
- masses of demonstration programs supplied on disc

*"knocks spots off other basics !"*

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NEW

## DRAUGHTS / CHECKERS

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# DON'T WORRY ABOUT A> THING

*As well as tackling LocoScript of course, we spend much of our time on 8000 Plus trying to broaden LocoScripters' horizons – hinting at some of the things you can turn your PCW to once you cross that great divide of CP/M's A> prompt. The PCW was originally conceived as a LocoScript-only machine (hence the all-in-one bundle of printer plus word processor), with CP/M added as an afterthought. Thanks to the need for marketing teams to find a nice simple way of describing and pushing products, it's been saddled with this 'dedicated word processor' tag ever since. In America they actually tell you when they sell you a PCW that it can't run other software because it's strictly a word processor! So, to provide balance, we stress the general purpose micro side of the PCW, and cover programming, accounts packages, desktop publishers, graphics programs, databases, comms, spreadsheets, games...*

*But just for once let's consider the other side of the argument. PCWs, like any machines, are tools to do a job. If you bought a car purely to get to work, you wouldn't lose sleep over not using it every weekend. Similarly, if writing is all you want to do, you shouldn't worry about not using CP/M; you're not 'wasting potential' through never leaving LocoScript. It's exactly what you require.*

*But then you meet someone who tells you how they're running their database and spreadsheet and writing a program in C to handle their business accounts and getting into comms and logging on to bulletin boards and tweaking public domain programs... and you feel guilty, because all you ever do is run LocoScript, and the only time you ever saw an A> was when you inserted the wrong disc by mistake.*

*Yet 90% of PCW owners use LocoScript almost exclusively – and they don't seem to feel they're missing out. So, next time you get cornered by a CP/M enthusiast, don't feel guilty and just mumble that you only use that word processor thing that came with the machine; be positive. If you'd wanted a games machine, you'd have bought an Atari ST. If you'd wanted a choice of six million business programs, you'd have invested in a PC. If you'd wanted a desktop publishing machine, you'd have splashed out on a Macintosh. But you wanted a word processor, no more, no less: a good, easy-to-use, straightforward, inexpensive, word processor. You're a dedicated LocoScripter not through lack of inspiration, but through sound choice.*

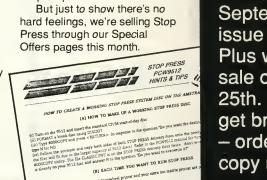
Rob Insley

## Bareface cheek

We recently had a letter from a user of AMS's excellent 'Stop Press' package complaining that the notes given him by AMS on running the program on a 9512 didn't seem to work. Looking at the sheet supplied by AMS we got a feeling we'd seen it somewhere before – indeed, it turned out the material had been published in 8000 Plus as a tipoff, written by Ben Taylor (8000 Plus editor in a bygone age) and sent to AMS at their request with '© Future Publishing 1988' on the bottom!

Naughty, naughty, boys and girls, passing off copyright material as your own... and you don't get away with just crediting us as having 'tested' the routine! Lest anyone think we and AMS hit on the same idea simultaneously, well, you know how the Ordnance Survey put deliberate mistakes in their maps to catch out plagiarised versions? We put in an, ahem, deliberate mistake too. The line reading 'At the A> prompt...' should begin 'Just before the A> prompt appears, press [STOP] (to ensure any PROFILE.SUB on your startup disc does not run, then at the A> prompt...'

But just to show there's no hard feelings, we're selling Stop Press through our Special Offers pages this month.


STOP PRESS PCW9512 HINTS & TIPS

HOW TO CREATE A WORKING 'STOP PRESS' SYSTEM DISC ON YOUR AMSTRAD

(A) HOW TO MAKE UP A WORKING STOP PRESS DISC

(B) EACH TIME YOU WANT TO RUN STOP PRESS

## LocoScript posters

The LocoScript wallcharts we gave away free with our May issue proved very popular – we've been inundated with requests for extra ones. Unfortunately we ran out almost immediately after publication.

However, we're only here to please, and so we're getting them reprinted. Hopefully next month we'll have details of how to order.

## Organiser competition

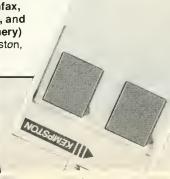
As ever there was a huge response and the local paper recycling companies are doing great business thanks to another sackful of cards. Remember you had to match five types to five characters to win Daatafax software. The correct answers, in the infallible opinion of our judges, were *A-3; B-1; C-4; D-2; E-5.*

The lucky winners were:

**First prize (Daatafax, mouse, interface, and organiser stationery)**
Mr A C Pratt, Beeston, Nottingham;

**Second prize (Daatafax plus vinyl binder and stationery)**
Mr J L V Beare, Sedbergh, Cumbria and Mr G Hitchin, Watford, Herts;

**Third prize (Daatafax plus stationery)**
Mrs D Burgess, Staines, Middlesex and Greg Harrison, Belfast




Your prizes are even now on their way. Thanks to Kempston for helping us organise the competition.

Nobody won the special prize, incidentally, for spotting the deliberate mistake in the picture that went with the competition – the mouse was *not* a hi-tech hi-spec Swiss-made Kempston mouse, but one of their rivals'! (Kempston fortunately saw the funny side of it). A shame, because we had lined up a special upwardly mobile prize of a three-week holiday for two in Thailand plus a compact disc player...

8000 PLUS

The sunny September issue of 8000 Plus will be on sale on August 25th. Don't just get browned off – order your copy now!

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# ISENSTEIN

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| 710181 | PCW8512 PCB, CPU | £75.95 | £93.75 |
| 700771 | PCW9512 PCB, CPU | £80.00 | £97.95 |
| 111171 | PCW8256/512 PCB, Monitor | £48.95 | £74.25 |
| 600771 | PCW9512 PCB, Monitor | £48.95 | £74.25 |
| 511171 | PCW8256/512 PCB, Keyboard | £21.95 | £28.95 |
| 500771 | PCW9512 PCB, Keyboard | £21.95 | £28.95 |
| 831171 | PCW8256/512 PCB, Printer | £15.95 | £27.95 |
| 800771 | PCW9512 PCB, Printer | £15.95 | £27.95 |

### ● REPLACEMENT AMSTRAD PCW DISC DRIVES:-

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|---|---|---|---|
| 500091 | PCW8256/512 "A" Disc Drive | £64.75 | £80.00 |
| 422171 | PCW8512/9512 "B" Disc Drive | £72.75 | £96.00 |
| 410771 | PCW9512 "A" Disc Drive | £72.75 | £96.00 |

### ● REPLACEMENT AMSTRAD PCW PRINTER PARTS:-

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| 721171 | PCW8256/512 Printer Mechanism | £39.95 | £61.95 |
| 681171 | PCW8256/512 Printer Head | | £36.25 |
| 761171 | PCW8256/512 Motor Head Drive | | £14.25 |
| 321171 | PCW8256/512 Paper Holder (Black) | | £2.25 |
| 121171 | PCW8256/512 Paper Tray (Grey) | | £8.75 |
| 432171 | PCW8256/512 Printer Head Lid (Black) | | £5.55 |
| 112171 | PCW8256/512 Tractor Feed Unit | | £15.75 |
| 821171 | PCW8256/512 24 Volt DC Cable | | £5.25 |

### ● REPLACEMENT AMSTRAD PCW KEYBOARD PARTS:-

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| 900771 | PCW9512 Full Keyboard (Less Case) | P.O.A |
| 620171 | PCW8256/512 Full Keyboard (Less Case) | £46.25 |
| 332171 | PCW8256/512 Keyboard DIN. Cable | £7.25 |

### ● REPLACEMENT AMSTRAD PCW PARTS MISC:-

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 825628 | PCW8256 Memory Expansion Kit | P.O.A |
| 825611 | PCW8256/512 Service Manual | £12.00 |
| 951211 | PCW9512 Service Manual | £18.00 |
| 310171 | PCW8256/512 On/off Power Switch | £5.25 |
| 320171 | PCW8256/512 Line Output Transformer | £19.75 |
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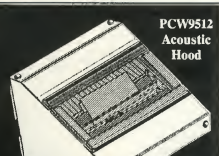

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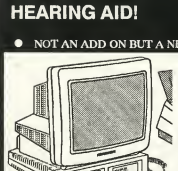

Our Professionally made Acoustic Hoods are designed to look good and match the printer it has to silence. If you do not see your make of printer here please phone us for more details.
The PCW9512 Hood comes in two, formats flat pack, "anybody who can knock up a MFI bookshelf should be able to cope! (8000 PLUS DEC 1987) and Ready made for those of you with little time to spare! (POSTAGE FREE)

### ● ISENSTEIN ACOUSTIC PRINTER HOODS:-

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|---|---|---|---|
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| AS8202 | | Assembled | £29.95 |
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| AS9502 | | Assembled | £39.95 |
| AS3101 | AMSTRAD DMP3160 | Kit | £29.95 |
| AS3102 | | Assembled | £37.95 |
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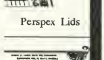
| AS4002 | | Assembled | £49.95 |
| ASL301 | AMSTRAD LQ3500 | Kit | £38.95 |
| ASL302 | | Assembled | £47.95 |
| ASL501 | AMSTRAD LQ5000 | Kit | £42.95 |
| ASL502 | | Assembled | £ 52.95 |
| JK6101 | JUKI 6100 | Kit | £41.95 |
| JK6102 | | Assembled | £49.95 |

Perspex Lids

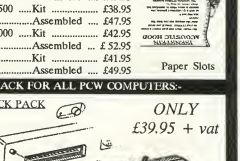


Paper Slots

### ● BATTERY BACK PACK FOR ALL PCW COMPUTERS:-

IS8901 BATTERY BACK PACK
Simply plugs into the back of the PCW8256/9512 and waits for that silly moment when you turn your PCW off forgetting that all your work had not been saved! Battery Back pack Beeps and holds data for 1 hour on its built in rechargeable batteries.

*ONLY £39.95 + vat*

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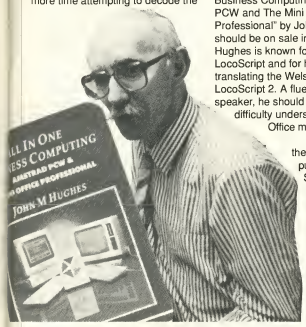
## By hook or by book...

For the baffled band of long-suffering Mini Office Professional followers who've been spending more time attempting to decode the manual than actually running the program, help will shortly be on hand. By the end of July, "All in One Business Computing – Amstrad PCW and The Mini Office Professional" by John Hughes should be on sale in bookshops. Mr Hughes is known for his books on LocoScript and for his hand in translating the Welsh version of LocoScript 2. A fluent Welsh speaker, he should find little difficulty understanding the Mini Office manual.




Costing £11.95 the book is published by Sigma Press (0625 531035) and promises to solve all problems encountered in interpreting the documentation. We hope to review it in next month's 8000 Plus.

## Tales of the Paranormal

'Mindfighter', a new graphics adventure game from Abstract Concepts, follows the adventures of a psychic eleven-year old boy who wakes up on a pile of rubble in the middle of a desolate cityscape following a nuclear holocaust (it's actually Southampton – and no jokes about over £100 of damage being done). It all sounds very grim, made even worse by the fact that Robin, the boy-hero, can't remember anything about how he got there. Anyway, it's up to you to lead him through a highly treacherous and inhospitable landscape.

The game comes with a 160-page novella of the same name by Anna Popkess. Everything concerning the parapsychological seems very well researched as does the turn of current affairs during the last months of 1987 (the backdrop against which the action is set).

The software uses digitised graphics, boasts an advanced English parser (in other words, the program can break down and make sense of quite complex user-typed commands) and features an icon-driven system control. The whole package costs £24.99. For details phone 01 431 1101.

## Cataloguing success

Leading computer suppliers, SBS, are launching a new catalogue exclusively for the Amstrad PCW (and PC) market. The catalogue's range of products includes accessories and software training programs.

SBS pride themselves on having thoroughly researched the needs of the Amstrad market before putting the catalogue together. They also go to great lengths to stress that all the products have undergone rigorous testing before inclusion. The catalogue is available free of charge and copies are available from SBS on 0273 726331.

# NEWS

## PC LocoScript rumours grow

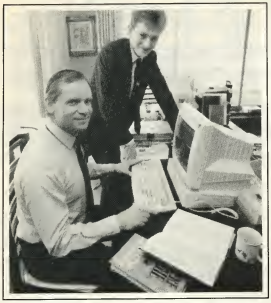
Rumours that a PC version of LocoScript may be under preparation are gathering strength. While this would enable LocoScript users to enjoy their favourite word processor on their PC at work , for example, it would also open up portable word processing opportunities through Amstrad's recent portable model, the PPC.

Many PCW owners, whether writers, journalists, business users or hobbyists, want the ability to put information on disc away from their PCW 'base' – in the library, on the train, or on holiday. The most popular option at the moment is to use a Cambridge Computers Z88 portable for this – it has its own built-in word processor, very different from LocoScript, requiring the user to learn a new system. Also there is the problem of transferring files from it onto the PCW when you get home which necessitates having to convert to ASCII (simple text files with no italics, bold or layouts).

The launch of the PPC came last year. For £399 to £599 (depending on the number of optional extras such as modems) this boasts disc drives (which the Z88 doesn't) but these are for $5\frac{1}{4}$ inch discs, as opposed to the PCW's 3 inch, necessitating file transfer via a cable link. Many word processing programs are available for the PPC (WordStar, Mini Office etc.) but not as yet LocoScript. The launch of a PC version would enable portable word processing for PCW users without them having to learn a new system, and files could be transferred straight across and used directly on the PCW without ASCII conversion.

Neither Amstrad nor Locomotive (producers of LocoScript and LocoScript 2 in their only current format, that for the PCW) would comment, but general feeling is growing that 1989 could see a PC LocoScript release.

# LOOK WHO IT IS



No, not the chap in the background – the one with the PCW 9512. Yes, it's Jeffrey Archer, the best selling author, who has at last got round to the benefits of LocoScript by acquiring two 9512s (what's wrong with the other one, then?)

How could he have written all those books without a PCW? Anyway, he must be pretty handy with electronics, because he seems already to have added a second disc drive to it. The chap in the background, incidentally, is Mark Weatherall of Silicon Valley.

## Getting Carried Away

Cambridge Computer Ltd (of Sir Clive Sinclair fame) have announced the launch of the Z88 Pocket Modem, the latest in a long line of peripherals designed specifically for the portable Z88 computer. Roughly the size of a pack of cards, the battery-powered modem weighs in at 130 grammes and is capable of doing all that a normal-sized modem can do: it has variable baud rates and a choice of protocols, allowing both national and international communications.

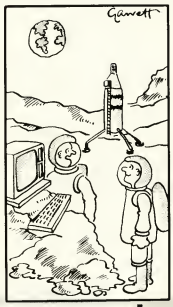
The Pocket Modem is supplied with software which contains an on-line help service provided either by MicroLink or the Z88 bulletin board. An added bonus is that the modem can also be plugged straight into a standard RS232C serial port, so that it can be used with non-portable personal computers as well. The Z88 Pocket Modem costs £149.95 plus VAT.

## Attack of the sheets

One of the biggest headaches for 9512 owners has been the lack of a sheet feeder – a device which will feed individual A4 sheets continuously into the printer for, say, a mailshot with LocoMail. The best they have been able to do up to now is to use continuous paper, which looks a bit cheap after you've torn the sprocket holes off and detracts from the effect of that perfect quality daisywheel printing.

Now at last it seems their needs have been satisfied. RSC of Watford have, they say, a scoop purchase of a sheet feeder for 9512 printers for £169 plus VAT. It should be available as you read this – details from them on 0923 243301.

"I SUPPOSE THEY'LL DO A MARTIAN LOCOSCRIPT NOW..."




## Haven't the foggiest...

For any writer, student or teacher, whose primary weapon is the Amstrad PCW, Scarabeus Software have recently released a new text analyser and quantifier, called TexAtrix.

The program, costing £5.99, will count the number of words, blocks and sentences present in a given ASCII document (you have to convert LocoScript documents into this format) as well as working out the average number of words per sentence and the average number of characters per word.

More usefully, though, it will calculate the readability of the document (or the FOG Index, if you want to be au fait with the jargon). This should give you a number which indicates the degree of ease (or difficulty) with which the document can be perused.

Ordinary, uncomplicated English prose has a FOG Index of 7-8, for example. 1-2 probably indicates a tabloid and if you end up with something approaching 18-20, then you can be pretty sure that you're reading the Mini Office Professional manual. Phone 01 515 4313 for further information.

## Solitary vices

Thurston Techniques, who specialise in producing discs with ready-made templates for LocoScripters, have made their first venture into games. 'Double T Patience' lets you play Pairs, Kuala Lumpur, Foursome, Poker Patience, One Foundation and Fourways, on your PCW instead of on a pack of cards.

New template discs for filofax and personal organiser users are also available. Details from 0395 277496.

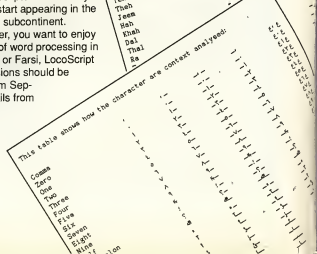
# As easy as ذ ز ژ ش ش !

As hinted in the June issue of 8000 Plus, Locomotive Systems of Dorking have further extended the range of languages covered by LocoScript 2. Not content with covering all European languages plus Welsh and Mathematics, they have started to move further afield. At last June's Multilingual Word Processing Conference in London they unveiled their latest venture – an Arabic/English bilingual word processor.

Arabic and English characters can be mixed, and you can also mix left-to-right and right-to-left text. Versions of the Arabic script are available to cater for Urdu and Farsi.

The logical progression, after Arabia, Iran and Pakistan, would be to India. "We're looking at the possibility of other languages from that area," said Locomotive's Howard Fisher. "There are certainly very strong pockets of local interest in Britain in various languages. Manchester, for example, is a Gujerati stronghold." All this is still very much at the planning stage, though, so it'll be a year or two before LocoScripted community newsletters start appearing in the scripts of the subcontinent.

If, however, you want to enjoy the benefits of word processing in Urdu, Arabic or Farsi, LocoScript in these versions should be available from September; details from Locomotive on 0306 740606.



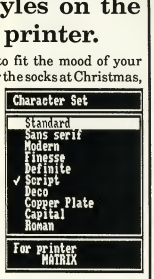
# Joined up writing on a PCW8256?
# Yes, use LocoFont!

## For just £19.95, LocoFont gives you ten distinctive typestyles on the PCW's built-in matrix printer.

With LocoFont you can select a typestyle to fit the mood of your writing. Use the Script font to thank Aunty for the socks at Christmas, the Roman font for professional business letters, the Copper Plate font for stylish invitations – or cut a dash with Deco.

To select a typestyle, simply pick the font you require from one simple LocoScript menu.

Of course, coming from Locomotive Software, all ten styles include all of LocoScript 2's characters and accents. You'll even get better looking text in 15 and 17 pitch – the new fonts have twice the resolution of the old!




## LocoScript 2 – *New Edition!*

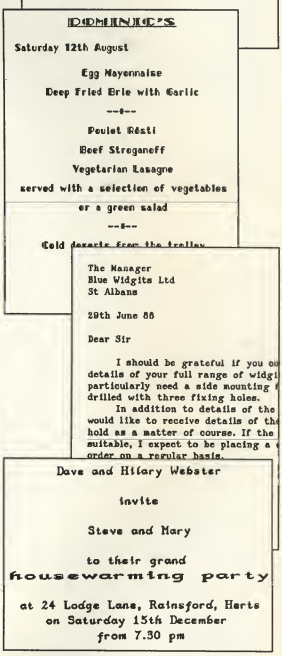
**If you haven't already, now's the time to move up to LocoScript 2 – the better word processor for the PCW.**

Not only have we released LocoFont (which only works with LocoScript 2), but LocoScript 2 itself now comes with two high quality typestyles. And if you want to use a different printer, we now support over 250 matrix, daisywheel and laser printers – but for some, you may need the Printer Drivers Disc.

The new edition of LocoScript 2 costs £24.95. Buy LocoScript 2 together with our spelling checker LocoSpell for £34.90 saving £10 on the combined price. To complete the family, add LocoMail for £29.95.

*Note: A free upgrade of LocoSpell or LocoMail to work with LocoScript 2 is available. For details of the upgrade, or of any Locomotive products phone (0306) 740606 – 24 hours.*

LOCOMOTIVE SOFTWARE

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| ☐ | LocoMail | £29.95 |
| ☐ | LocoScript 2 *(New Edition)* | £24.95 |
| ☐ | LocoFont (requires LocoScript 2.12 or later) | £19.95 |
| ☐ | Printer Drivers Disc (specify 8256/8512/9512) | £14.95 |
| | Total | _____ |

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☐ Charge to my Access Card

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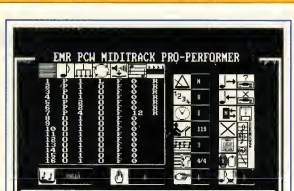
*Note: All prices include VAT and UK postage.*

***Real* composers don't use keyboards to compose of course. They just write the dots down. Bach used to write down four-part fugues off the top of his head without a keyboard in sight. Beethoven composed his last symphonies without being able to hear a note. Mozart went even further; when asked if he'd finished writing *The Magic Flute*, he said of course, he just hadn't written it down yet.**

**For most of us, though, it's a whole lot easier composing at a keyboard so you can actually hear what your future Top 40 hit or string quartet sounds like. And using your PCW as a recording studio, you can change individual lines – just the drum pattern, or just the bass line, or just the second violin – and instantly hear the effects. Instead of recording your work on tape you have it on disc and keep polishing it until it's right – then press the button and sit back as the PCW plays your work back to you.**




Your Amstrad is pretty useless when it comes to making music. All it can do is beep a B flat, which makes it tricky to play anything except *One Note Samba* on it, and then in the wrong key. Other computers – the Amiga, Atari, or even the Amstrad CPC – have built-in sound chips, some as powerful as expensive synthesisers. Not so your PCW.

So, enter the MIDI interface. This is a box which plugs into the expansion port at the back of your PCW and links in to a MIDI instrument. They have the handy property of being playable by your computer and have special outlets at the back (MIDI means Musical Instrument Digital Interfaces and is nothing to do with skirt lengths) which your MIDI interface plugs into. (You can buy a wide variety of MIDI instruments – synthesisers, guitar-like instruments and drum machines – but a non-MIDI instrument won't do. MIDI synths start at about £200.) The idea is that you use your PCW to play the instruments, or, if you like, you use your MIDI instruments as extensions of your PCW.

Once you've connected your MIDI instrument – say a cheap synthesiser – to your PCW, cue the software. This should do a variety of things but essentially it lets you play a number of lines on your synth and store them on disc on different 'tracks', just like those multi-track tape recorders. You can then get the PCW to play back any or all of the tracks you've recorded so far through your synth, while simultaneously playing and recording a new track. How well your system copes with playback of, say, sixteen lines of music all in different settings on the synthesiser (piano, guitar, brass etc.) depends on the sophistication of your instrument and the number of MIDI instruments you have to play back through.

For really impressive playback you can play your masterpiece through more than one instrument simultaneously – so you could have a drum machine, a MIDI guitar and a synth all playing your composition together, controlled solely by your PCW.

## EMR MIDI INTERFACE AND PRO PERFORMER

**Interface £89.90/ProPerformer Software £59.95 ● Electro Music Research (0702 335747) ● All PCWs**

This product has been a long time in preparation – it was scheduled for release somewhere around June last year! However, along with DHCP's sequencing software plus interface, it's the only real musical add-on for the PCW, and claims a higher specification and more powerful features.

Having connected your synthesiser to the PCW via the interface and cables run the software as usual under CP/M. The disc is protected so you can't make any working copies.

There is only one screen in EMR, so it's just as well that it's interesting to look at. There are three basic parts to it. The left side is a list of all 16 tracks on the current working piece with details for each – whether played or unplayed, looped (repeated ad nauseam, eg. a ground bass) or not, and so on. The bottom or 'command' section lets you choose the main functions of playing, recording, 'punch-in' (altering one musical line without affecting others) and 'change', which lets you move into the icons. These occupy the right hand section of the screen.

Every operation is worked by icons rather than menus or commands – to save a composition, for example, you move with the cursor keys across the screen until you settle on the 'save' icon, a crotchet with an arrow projecting from its base. Options are put into action by pressing the space bar rather than pressing [RETURN], which is a little confusing at first. The icons themselves are a little bewildering at first too but are easy to recognise after a while.

Following the 'Getting Started' chapter, you work through the foolproof instructions and load and play DEMO1 which turns out to be a jolly rendition of Mozart's Symphony No. 40. Looking at the left hand screen you see details for each track – any piece EMR uses can have up to 16 independent tracks, or lines of music.

Each line can be polyphonic, ie. more than one note. You can then fool around with this piece and play the results – for example, you might select certain tracks to be played and silence others, eliminating a bass or melody line. You can adjust the playback tempo so that it comes out *lento grave* or *prestissimo*. You can loop some of the tracks so that any line you like is repeated for the duration of the piece. In short, you can totally wreck the music.

### Track record

After Wolfgang has turned in his pauper's grave a few times you can start on composing yourself. Selecting RECORD from the command menu produces a series of prompts letting you select the track to record on. Other options can be selected through the icons. You can have a metronome beeping away in the background, as you play, to keep your timing constant, for example (it doesn't get recorded, of course). You can have a count-in if you like, (a sort of electronic 'one, two, one-two-three-four...') which again doesn't get recorded.

There's no limit to the length of the track, except that imposed by the memory of your PCW. You have a memory indicator on the menu so you can tell if you're running out of space. There's also a bar counter telling you how many bars into the composition you are, and you can alter the number of beats in a bar through the icons with any number from 2/4 to 9/4. This makes no difference to anything except the bar counter though.

When you finish you can instantly play the line back – it

### Notation note

There's no musical notation at all, either on screen or printed out. Of course on the EMR package it's not strictly needed to compose even 'classical' pieces, but it seems surprising that there still isn't any music score writing software for the PCW.

### Book note

Introductions to making music with MIDI can be found in any high street music shop. If you're lucky enough to live a long way from a high street you could try phoning your nearest book store and ordering *Midi Basics* (ISBN 0 7119 0952 0) by Otsuka and Nakajima, from Amsco at £7.95, or *Midi for Musicians* (ISBN 0 7119 0822 2) by Craig Anderton for £9.95, also from Amsco.

### Synth note

If you don't already have a MIDI instrument, the 'standard' starter is the Casio CZ101 for £220 or so, available from any high street music store or large electrical shop. If you want your synth to be able to play back different sounds at the same time (one track 'organ', another 'bells' etc) you'll need a multi-timbral model.

# COMPOSE YOURSELF

EMR's MIDI interface and software promise to turn your PCW into a recording studio. Can it be true? Rob Ainsley dons his baseball cap and shades and finds out...

gets stored in the memory for now – and record a new line on another track if you like, with the tracks you've already recorded being played at the same time. Then you can save your work to disc.

## Wrong story

On playback you notice all those wrong notes, and EMR provides some editing facility. Ideally, of course, you could just pick out that duff note and replace it with the right one, but nothing is that simple. (EMR are talking about a Music Editor program which would let you edit the music data directly but it won't be available for a while.)

However, you don't have to record the whole track again. Using the 'punch-in' option you can play back the track with the mistake in and, at a point before the mistake occurs, just start playing the right notes. EMR records the new notes on that track after that point. If you want to record a silence, you just twiddle any control which doesn't make a noise.

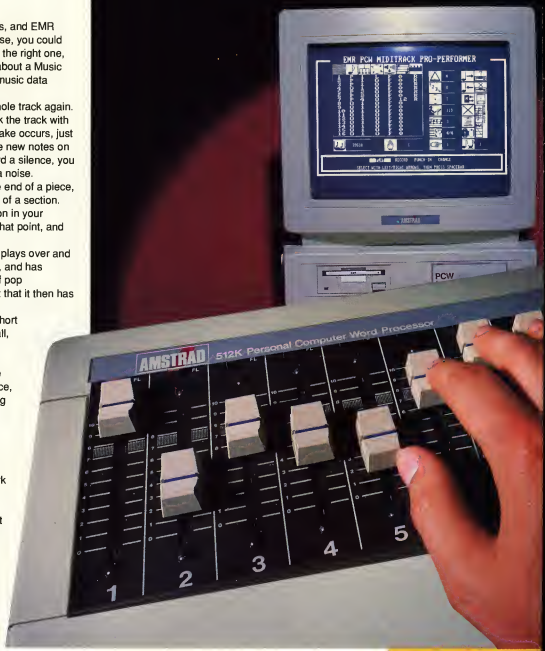
You have to continue your punch-in to the end of a piece, and you can't just edit one note in the middle of a section. However, if you make another mistake later on in your punch-in, then you can punch in again from that point, and so on until your track is reasonably OK.

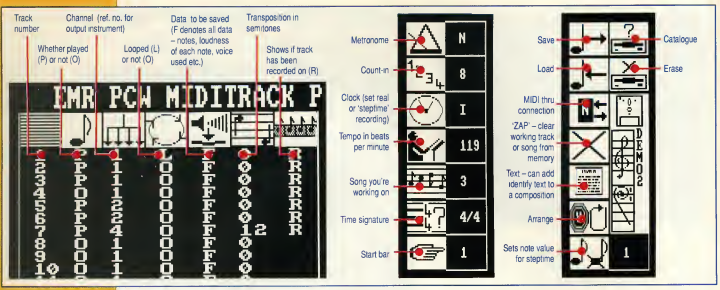
Any track can be 'looped'. A looped track plays over and over again right until the end of the last track, and has obvious uses in, for example, the bass line of pop compositions (and in classical pieces, except that it then has to be called 'ground bass' or 'passacaglia' to make it sound loftier). By recording several short tracks of different lengths and looping them all, you can get a seemingly never-ending composition of strangely shifting lines. With tracks of different lengths, the last note of the shortest track hangs on till the end of the piece, which is annoying. You have to tidy it up using the punch-in facility.

## Satisfactory arrangement?

Compositions can be saved as tracks or 'songs', the collection of your tracks played together. Alternatively you can save your work as a 'performance', the tracks plus the arrangement they are played in.

The arrangement? This is one of the most powerful features of EMR. You can plan out your composition or performance by telling the PCW to play track 1 here, then track 2 there, then track 3 plus track 1 again here, and so on. Hence you can knock together a standard verse-verse-chorus-verse-chorus pop song in five or six minutes (though chart pop records don't take as long as this to compose, of






### Note note

MIDI has a range of ten and a half octaves, or 128 notes – one and a half times more than a piano

### The opposition

Another company offering a MIDI interface (£79.95) and composing software (£45 for 8 track, £60 for 12 track) is DHCP. This is a similar package to EMR's but with no editing facilities, arrangements or steptime recording as yet.

course). Then, by looping some bits at the end, you can add a repeat-chorus-till-fade section to finish on.

The only problem with the arrangement is that it's passed over in the manual, which says little more than 'to arrange the composition, use the arrange feature'. So, it'll take a lot of patience and experimentation to get the hang of it. There really should be a lot more on this in the manual – for pop compositions this feature is essential and some good clear worked examples of arrangements ought to be there.

## Steptime and song

Steptime recording is another very powerful feature of EMR's package. Normally EMR just records whatever duration of note you play, but there will be times when you want a line in strict tempo – for example if you're setting up a bass figure to be repeated through a section. EMR lets you do this by selecting 'steptime'. You select a note value – crotchet, quaver, demisemiquaver etc. – and play a note followed by a press on the space bar. This adds a note of the specified duration and pitch to the composition. A bit laborious, but accurate. A confusing part of this procedure is the count-in beeping which appears on the first few presses of the space bar.

Steptime recording produces impressive, if rather robotic, results. In particular a strictly steptimed melody line sounds surprisingly quicker in some places than in others – proof that there's no substitute for human interpretation.

Tempo is another factor under computer control, and another powerful aid to the hamfisted keyboard player. Recording and playback can be done at any speed, so you can record the easy bits at normal tempo, then for your flashy heavy metal MIDI guitar solo (or your *appassionata* MIDI violin cadenza) you set the tempo to slow, and record your twenty-note runs at a nice leisurely half-pace. The effect on playback at normal tempo is amazing, and has the benefit that, unlike most heavy metal guitarists, you have time to choose some good notes for your solo.

Any line can be transposed up or down any number of semitones – ie. from any key to any other key. Thus you could play that backing track you recorded in C in a new key, E flat perhaps, for your tenor horn player to improvise over.

## And finale...

There isn't much bad news. Some sections of the manual gloss over important points (arrangements, for example). There is as yet no facility to edit notes individually – if you make a mistake you have to re-record from the point at which the mistake occurred – but the 'punch-in' function goes a long way to making your music truly editable in the same way as your word-processed documents are. The choice of the space bar as a [RETURN] key is quirky though you get used to it.

Overall this is a very welcome arrival on the PCW music scene. It is easy to use and has a wide variety of features that will make it useful to pop or 'classical' musicians. The PCW was never intended as a musician's tool, and professionals would look elsewhere for their recording and performance needs; but EMR's package does the job well, and for all PCW-owning MIDI musicians, this is a must. ■

● *Our thanks to the Bath branch of Dixons who kindly lent us the MIDI synthesisers used in this review. Thanks to Duck, Son & Pinker, also of Bath, who allowed us to photograph one of their mixing desks.*

## How much can you save

You can elect to have just the notes saved, or have the MIDI data saved for any track too – ie. if the line was recorded on the 'Japanese koto' setting of your synth, this will be remembered and when the line plays back it will automatically set the synth to Japanese koto. Of course, if you have lots of different lines playing back through one synth, you can only expect one sound – it can't play one line as a koto and another simultaneously as a pan pipe. For a variety of playback sounds you need a number of MIDI instruments, or a multi-timbral synthesiser which can handle different sounds simultaneously like this.

One problem with most synthesisers is that (like harpsichords) one note always plays at a fixed volume. This can make a melody line sound rather hard and rigid. However, on touch sensitive synthesisers the volume of a note depends on how hard you hit the key (like pianos) enabling a greater degree of interpretation. When you save a track you can also have saved the keyboard velocity of each note – so if you have a touch sensitive synthesiser your beautiful interpretation is saved.

### EMR PRO-PERFORMER

**PLUSES**

- ▲ Icon based screen
- ▲ Can record lines independently
- ▲ Some editing facilities
- ▲ Facility for slow recording with fast playback
- ▲ Steptime recording for strict in-tempo lines
- ▲ Tracks can be looped
- ▲ Arrangements facility

**MINUSES**

- ▼ Arrangements facility difficult to understand, manual unclear
- ▼ No musical notation at all, on screen or printer

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **RANGE OF FEATURES** | **5/5** | **EASE OF USE** | **4/5** |
| **PERFORMANCE** | **4/5** | **DOCUMENTATION** | **3/5** |

***8000 PLUS* VALUE VERDICT 5/5**

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## DAISYWHEEL £130 (+VAT CARR £15)

Triumph Adler 2000, Diablo 630 Compatibility, will run on all IBM + Amstrad PC's 30 different printwheels available. Great Value for PCW 8512 with interface - £50. All, and more features than more expensive printers. Other printers also available P.O.A.

## PCW 9512 ACOUSTIC HOOD £89 (+ VAT CARR £10)

This hood has been developed with the close co-operation of Amstrad themselves. It has all the features, and benefits you would expect from a company already involved in the manufacture of 95% of hoods for all printers. The hood is British made, has 25mm foam throughout with a neat compact design finished in whisper grey, with a perspex lid, the 9512 hood has superb acoustic properties

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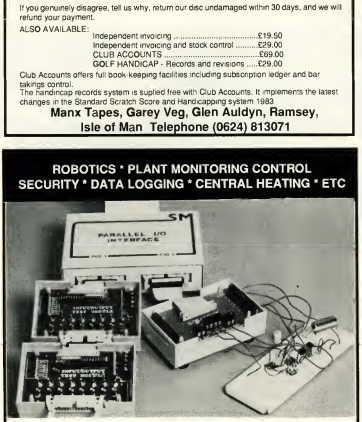


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# TRANSFER DEALS

## Move files between your PCW and PC the easy way with NewStar's CSTAM

**Rumour has it that somewhere out there, strange machines exist called 'Personal Computers', or PCs, obscure things with pokey little screens and *no printer or software* supplied when you buy them! Yet many PCW owners also have a PC, and sooner or later comes the time when files have to be transferred between them. CSTAM sets out to make that process easy...**

Moving files between any two computers of different formats, for example between a PC and PCW, is one of those eternal bugbears of computing. Maybe you have a PCW at home and a PC at work, and want to work on some customer files at home – or perhaps you want to hook up your PPC and PCW for portable word processing.

One solution is to buy an external 5¼ inch drive for your PCW and just use the discs from your PC in your PCW; another solution is to buy an RS232 serial/parallel interface (£60 or less from mail order houses) for your PCW and transfer files through a cable from one machine to the other.

You can do this without special software, using just some of the free utilities on your CP/M (or MS-DOS) discs. This process can be tricky though; you need to set up the right baud rates, make a few arcane commands with PIP and DEVICE and SETSIO and so on, and generally do a lot of fiddling about to get the computers on each other's wavelength. CSTAM sets out to give you special easy-to-follow idiot-proof programs which will do everything for you, and succeeds nicely.

For your money you get a cable to connect your RS232 interface to the PC's serial port and two discs with the transferring software, one three inch, plus either one three and a half, or one five and a quarter (respectively for the PCW, PC, and portable PC).

Using the system is dead easy. To transfer a file from, say a PCW to a PC, you first connect the two machines via the cable. Then you start up CP/M on the PCW and MS-DOS on the PC, insert the appropriate CSTAM disc in each drive, and at the A> prompt on the PCW type `OUTFILE`[RETURN]. A message appears asking you to check the PC is ready to receive – you do this by typing `INFILE`[RETURN] at the PC's A> prompt and get a 'Ready to receive' message.

```
A)outfile

CSTAM-OUTFILE Serial Line Fast File TRANSMITTER
Version 1.03              Serial Number 100000
Copyright (C) 1986, Software Technology Limited

Make sure RECEIVER is READY
before proceeding further
Contact established

count  File name     Option? (Yes, No, All, End)
    1  LIBEL.DOC     no
    1  SLANDER.DOC   yes
       LIES.TXT      no
    1  LIES.TXT      yes
       PORKIES.      end

Transmission finished
```

Sending files from the PCW...

You then insert your PC data disc. Back on the PCW you insert your source data disc, and press any key to get the copying sequence started. CSTAM lists the files on the disc and you then have a variety of transfer options: `Y` if you want the file transferred, `N` if not, `A` if you want all files transferred, and `E` if you want to end the transfer there. You can also specify certain files only for transfer consideration – eg. typing `OUTFILE *.TXT` will only offer files ending in .TXT for transfer.

And that, really, is all there is to it. Going from the PC to the PCW is the same but with INFILE and OUTFILE exchanged, and the procedure is the same for the PPC version except that a three and a half inch disc is used.

### You only have to ASCII

Before you go out and buy a PPC plus CSTAM for your portable word processing, remember that you can generally transfer only ASCII (ie. simple text with no bold, italic or fancy formats) files between machines. LocoScript doesn't run on the PPC so you'd have to learn another word processor and prepare ASCII files on that before transferring and making a LocoScript document out of them on the PCW using the 'Insert text' option. Also you can't, for example, transfer Mini Office or a game like The Pawn from your PCW to your PC and expect it to work.

Another caveat is that comms being comms, transfers can often refuse to work or stop abruptly half way through locking both machines up simply because the cables have slipped during transfer. And, as noted, you can do transfers for free (8000 Plus, issue 21, p. 46, June 1988).

However, CSTAM makes it easy for you, and the only quibble is the price. Anyone who regularly has to transfer stuff between their Amstrads and can't be bothered with complicated settings up will find it worthwhile though. ■

**Transfer news**
For news on a possible PC version of LocoScript, see this month's news.

```
A)infile

CSTAM-INFILE Serial Line  Fast File .. RECEIVER
Version 1.03              Serial Number 100000
Copyright (C) 1986, Software Technology Limited

Contact established

count  File name
    1  SLANDER.DOC

Transmission finished
```

...and receiving one

**CSTAM**

**PLUSES**
- ▲ Very easy to use
- ▲ Cables provided
- ▲ Works with PPC too

**MINUSES**
- ▼ A bit pricey – you could do the transfers for free using PIP, PC's COPY etc.
- ▼ You need a serial/parallel interface

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **RANGE OF FEATURES** | **1/5** | **EASE OF USE** | **5/5** |
| **PERFORMANCE** | **4/5** | **DOCUMENTATION** | **3/5** |

***8000 PLUS* VALUE VERDICT 3/5**

# OFFICIAL WORD

Part 5 of our Mini Office tutorial series. Is the word processor a trusty workhorse, or a white elephant? Is its manual a red herring or just a dead duck? Rob Ainsley tells you how to tame it...

**The first thing most people try after the database is Mini Office's word processor. You've used LocoScript, you know what a word processor can do, and learning Mini Office's word processor is just a matter of learning the commands. But why should you spend time doing this – what does Mini Office do that Loco doesn't? Read on...**

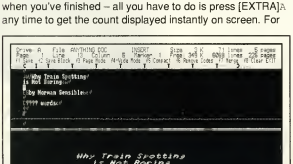
You're doing a long article, novel or business report. You want it in one and a half line spacing, in non-justified 10 pitch. You want the title printed at the top of each page, and the page number at the bottom. It is to be printed out in high quality on single sheet A4 paper.

Insert the Mini Office disc, type `office`[RETURN] as usual and select 'word processor'. You haven't any document defined yet but 'Edit document' gives you a blank one to start on.

The title page comes first. You want the title itself in a large size, so press [RETURN] a few times to get down the page then type [SHIFT][ALT]W, the title, and finally [ALT]W. The first code sequence selects Wide characters and the second deselects it. You can split it up with a [RETURN] in the middle if it's long.

Next comes your name. Normally Mini Office prints in pica, or 10 pitch, characters, but if you wanted your name in a more modest 12 pitch elite, you'd type [SHIFT][ALT]E before it (and [ALT]E after it if you want to revert to 10 pitch).

Finally the word count. You can come back and fill this in when you've finished – all you have to do is press [EXTRA]A any time to get the count displayed instantly on screen. For now you might type `??? words` and preface this line with [SHIFT][ALT]C to get condensed print, [ALT]C to turn it off, if you wish.




Your title page in 'split screen' mode – note the effect of the W and I codes for wide and italic, the E and B codes for elite and bold, and the C codes for condensed. Lower case turns the effect off

## Centre point

All the above would be better centred rather than against the left margin as it is now, and the command [ALT]J put before the first line will make every subsequent line centred. After the last line you want to revert to left alignment, which you select with [ALT]< (actually the § key on the 8000s and the | key on the 9512).

The codes you've inserted show up as various dim symbols on the screen – it's a Mini Office convention that any non-printed instructions must be entered with [ALT] before them, and that they show up as dim things on the screen.

Force an end of page with [ALT]N; you're now on the next page and can define your header and footer. In Mini Office you can define any number of headers and footers – you just put new ones on the page where they are to start, rather than set them up in a separate area as in Loco. For a header, type [SHIFT][ALT]H – the cursor moves to the extreme left of the screen; headers don't obey the normal ruler lines, that line with dim Ts and dashes at the top of the page, about which more later in this series.

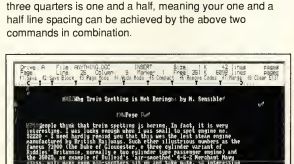
To centre the text of the header, type [SHIFT][ALT]M (for middle) and type the text. You can put in any bold commands ([SHIFT][ALT]B on, [ALT]B off) or italics ([SHIFT][ALT]I on, [ALT]I off) you like. For a ruling-off effect underneath, put a [SHIFT][ALT]U at the extreme left of the next line, press [SPACE] until you get to the extreme right, and then put a [ALT]U to stop underlining. Finally press [ALT]H to end the header.

The footer is similar. You can put headers and footers anywhere on a page. [SHIFT][ALT]F starts the footer, [ALT]F ends it, and the page number will be inserted by Mini Office where a [ALT]P code appears.

## Text match

Now you can start on the text. Type as normal using cursor and [DEL] keys, [RETURN], [TAB] etc. Changes of style, size of character etc. can be got with the above codes. If you go to the start of a long document and insert the code for, say, double width, note how the rest of the document is reformatted – if you only want to make one line double width, it's better to insert the 'off' code at the end of the line first before the 'on' code to make sure this spurious reformatting doesn't occur.

To set the line spacing, [SHIFT][ALT]Y[ALT]2 sets double line spacing, and similarly for 1, 3 and 4 line spacing. Adding the command [ALT]I after it multiplies these figures by three-quarters – so a little arithmetic shows that two times three quarters is one and a half, meaning your one and a half line spacing can be achieved by the above two commands in combination.



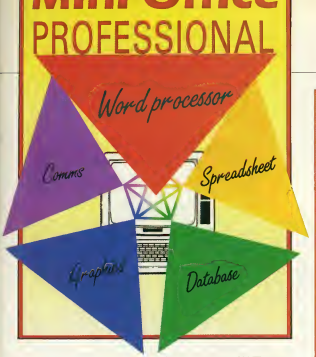

Setting up the headers and footers in normal mode

### We've been bugged

Database say most of the notorious bugs in the word processor have been fixed (unless you know differently). Most of those have been concerned with the page numbering in preview (on our example document the first three pages were numbered 1,2,30058) which nevertheless seems to print out OK.

### Quick way round

While in any menu, press [+] and letters appear by the side of each option (not by pressing these letters without having to use the cursors and [ENTER] – eg M for the word processor, D for the database etc. on the opening menu. [-] removes the letters, and you don't need them there to use this trick.




Useful combinations for moving around are [ALT] or [SHIFT] plus cursors, and [ALT][DOC] and [DOC]. Useful deleting combinations are [SHIFT] plus delete keys which deletes words, and [EXTRA] which deletes lines. Mini Office automatically reformats the document for you after these, and during insertions of text etc.

Blocks are a powerful feature of Mini Office. Press [CUT] with the cursor at the beginning of a block of text you want to move, copy or delete, [CUT] again at the end. You can then delete the block with [SHIFT][ALT] plus either delete key, move it to the position of the cursor with [PASTE], or copy it to the position of the cursor with [COPY]. To remove the block markers just delete them. The benefits of fast scrolling and the instant word counter will soon become obvious!

Save your work regularly by pressing [f1] and following the prompts ([EXIT] gets you back to the edit). If you want to load up a file later on you do this from the main word processor menu 'Load/Save' (document option).

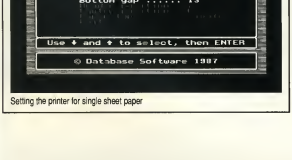
## The schizo screen

[f3] is a very powerful key and a big feature you don't have in LocoScript. Press it while editing and the screen splits into two (or reverts to one). The top half can still be used for editing, deleting, moving around the document etc, but the bottom half displays exactly what the printer will print out – bold, italic, pitch size, tabs, margins, headers, footers, page numbers and all. If you make any changes to the top half, the bottom half isn't updated until you press [RELAY]. Page breaks are shown by a dotted line in the top half.

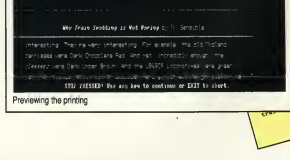
To print out, [EXIT] to the main menu and select 'Print'. You want to 'set up the printer' and choose 'page format' – here you tell Mini Office what sort of paper you're using. If using A4 single sheet, set 'page length' to 70 ([ENTER] then delete the old figure) and 'paper type' to 'single' (press [ENTER] to change it). Also, *set the 'bottom gap' to 13 instead of 6* – this is because in feeding single sheet paper, seven lines are 'wasted' at the top and must be compensated for at the bottom. If you don't, you'll find all your page numbers get displaced on to another page.

For continuous paper the settings would be 66, 'continuous' and 6. [EXIT] to the print menu and select 'default settings' – this lets you select the defaults (ie. the 'usual settings') for the printer – for example, to change between high and draft quality, cursor to the appropriate option and press [ENTER]. When the settings look right, [EXIT] back to the printer menu and select 'Preview', or 'Preview pages' if you just want to see how certain pages look – set the page to begin and end at 'first page' and 'last page'. (Early versions can crash if the numbers are the same!). The document is typed to the screen as it will be printed out.

When it looks OK, select 'Print' and away you go. Next month will cover layouts and more advanced features and will tell you how to make the printer do anything at all! ■



Setting the printer for single sheet paper


Previewing the printing

## Worth the trouble?

**There are plenty of reasons not to bother with the Mini Office word processor if you're happy with LocoScript. It works in a rather different way, so you have to spend at least as much time learning its commands as you spent on learning LocoScript – for example, 'italics on' ([+]:I in Loco) is [SHIFT][ALT]I; similarly 'italics off' ([-]:I) is [ALT]I in Mini Office. Also, LocoScript is better for many purposes – for example, printing with both margins justified takes many times longer in Mini Office as it stops to go back and overprint each word individually, and you can't print a document in proportional spacing (Loco's 'PS' pitches) at all. (Well, you *can* get proportional spacing in a document by using the command to send the code ESC p 1 to the printer, ie. [SHIFT][ALT]x followed by 27,112,49 with each digit prefixed by [ALT]. It does work, but only for one line, and it's a bit tedious putting this sequence into the beginning of each line of a 50k document)**

**Mini Office can mail merge but it isn't in the LocoMail class. Finally, Loco has all those familiar goodies like wacky symbols and characters, Locochar, and supports the use of a wide range of printers etc. and there are still a few bugs lurking in Mini Office's depths. Most of these, Database say, have been fixed.**

**But some things are ideally suited to Mini Office's word processor; and after all it's effectively free, so you may as well have a look at it. It has a few features Loco can't really offer; first must be the word counter, an instant way of seeing if you've finished your novel yet. There's also a full WYSIWIG system – 'what you see is what you get'. You can display on screen *exactly* what the final printout will look like – bold, italic, pitch size and all. It's also rather faster for long documents where you would do a lot of moving around, cutting and pasting of blocks etc. You also have a few oddities such as the option to number your pages automatically in Roman numerals!**

**It follows that it's good for very long 'raw text' documents such as novels, plays, computer programs etc, and, paradoxically almost, useful for documents where complex layouts are used.**

### WYSIWIG

What you see is only ever a loose approximation to what is printed out. This has led some computer experts to propose the alternative acronym WYSIOEALATWIPO which would be an even better Scrabble word.

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| Datastore (Digita) (Version II) | £28.00 |
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| Masterfile 8000 | £30.00 |
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**Database Manager Plus**
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| Tasman Tasword 8000* | £16.00 |
| Tasman Tasprint 8000* | £10.00 |
| Tasman Taspell 8000* | £12.00 |
| Tasman Tas Sign | £20.00 |
| Arnor Protext | £38.00 |
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## SPREADSHEETS PCW

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| Dr Draw | £30.00 |
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| Electric Studio Video Digitiser | £80.00 |

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(with Desktop)
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|---|---|
| Locoscript 2 with Locospell 2 | £28.00 |
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| Camsoft Sales Ledger | £38.00 |
| Camsoft Purchase Ledger | £38.00 |
| Camsoft Nominal Ledger | £38.00 |
| Camsoft Invoicing System | £38.00 |
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| PSIS-Stock, Invoicing and Sales | £69.00 |
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**Value for money**
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– 3 Help Menus – Best value ..... £129.00

**WS4000 (Miracle Tech)**
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**Sage Chit-Chat Software**

| | |
|---|---|
| Sage Combo (Chitchat + Linnet Modem) | £182 |
| Sage Chit Chat software | £78 |
| Dialup communications software | £65 |

**Master SCAN**

With MasterScan you can reproduce any picture on your PCW screen – and print it out as often as you like. **£45**

*Incorporate graphics into packages as The Desktop Publisher, Fleet Street Editor Plus and Newsdesk. Send Scanned images via modem to other PCW's anywhere*

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| Rotate | £17.00 |
| Plan It | £18.00 |
| Digital Pascal/MT+ | £35.00 |
| Digital C Basic Compiler | £35.00 |
| Tas Sign | £20.00 |
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| Iankey Two Fingers | £17.00 |
| Prospell | £20.00 |
| Arnor C | £40.00 |
| Arnor Maxam | £40.00 |
| Personal Tax Planner by Digita | £20.00 |
| Business Controller by Digita | £69.00 |
| Touch 'n' Go | £17.00 |

### DOT MATRIX PRINTERS

#### EPSON

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|---|---|
| Epson LX800 150 CPS/80COL | £185.00 |
| Epson EX800 300 CPS/50NLQ/80 COL | £385.00 |
| Epson EX1000 300 CPS/50NLQ/136 COL | £499.00 |
| Epson FX800 200 CPS/50NLQ/80 COL | £299.00 |
| Epson FX1000 200 CPS/50NLQ/132 COL | £379.00 |
| Epson SQ2500 Ink Jet | £925.00 |

#### LATEST EPSON PRINTERS 24 PINS

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|---|---|
| Epson LQ500 150 CPS/50NLQ | £295.00 |
| Epson LQ850 220 CPS/73NLQ | £420.00 |
| Epson LQ1050 132 COL/220 CPS/73NLQ | £520.00 |
| Epson LQ2500 132 COL/270 CPS/90NLQ | £685.00 |

**LATEST 24 PIN PRINTER**
**NEC P2200 (A WINNER)**
**£275**

# Panasonic

| | |
|---|---|
| Panasonic KX-P1081 80col. 120cps + 24cps NLQ | £145.00 |
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THE Star PRINTERS FOR BUSINESS

| | |
|---|---|
| Star NX15 120cps/30nlq/136col | £269.00 |
| Star NB24-10 24pin/216cps/72nlq/80col | £394.00 |
| Star NB24-15 24pin/216cps/72nlq/136col | £494.00 |
| Star NB15 Same as above but 300cps | £577.00 |

**NEW STAR PRINTER**

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| Star LC-10 Multifont Printer | £167.00 |
| Star LC-10 Colour Printer same as above | £200.00 |

### STAR LC24-10
### The latest 24 pin printer

- ★ 170 cps Draft
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- ★ 4k Standard Buffer
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- ★ Copes with continuous paper labels and separate sheets
- ★ Revolutionary paper park facility, allows single sheets to be inserted without removing the continuous supply

**RSC PRICE – £275**

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**THE NEW AMSTRAD LQ5000**
24 Pin Printer
**RSC PRICE – £360**

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| Amstrad LQ3500 24pin | £270.00 |

### DAISYWHEEL PRINTERS

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| Juki 6100 20CPS | £257.00 |
| Juki 8200 30CPS | £417.00 |

### AMSTRAD PCW PRINTER MAINTENANCE KIT

**For 8256/8512**
Remove ink deposits, maintain print quality
**RSC PRICE £14**

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|---|---|
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| (With 1 year on site maintenance) | £1375.00 |
| HP Laser Jet II | £1645.00 |
| Panasonic KX-P4450 | £1695.00 |
| Canon Laser LBP Mark II | £1595.00 |
| Canon 8HT-D/Bin | £2195.00 |
| Canon 8HT Duplex | £2650.00 |
| Brother HL8 | £1725.00 |
| Star Laser Printer 8 | £1695.00 |
| (Accessories available on request) | |

### BOOKS (no VAT payable)

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|---|---|
| Mallard Basic by Amstrad | £9.50 |
| Programming PCW by Ian Sinclair | £7.50 |
| S by S to Locoscript 1 | £4.95 |
| Desktop Publishing with the Amstrad PCW | £9.50 |
| Locoscript 2 by Ian Sinclair | £9.50 |

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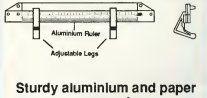
**For use with 9512 Sheet Feeder – POA**

## 9512 SHEET FEEDER RSC SCOOP!

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|---|---|---|
| £4.00 each | £3.50 each | £3.00 each |

| | |
|---|---|
| PCW Multistrike Ribbons | £5.00 |
| PCW Colour Ribbons (Blue, Brown, Red, Green) | £5.00 |

*Ribbons for other Printers*

### PCW 9512 RIBBONS

| QT2 | QT5 | QT10 (or more) |
|---|---|---|
| £3.35 each | £3.15 each | £3.00 each |

FOR DAISYWHEEL PRINTER ONLY
9512 Colour Ribbons (Red, Blue, Brown) £5.00

### PCW 9512 DAISYWHEELS

**AVAILABLE TYPE STYLES**

| Product Code | Typeface |
|---|---|
| Courier 10 | Prestige Pica 10 |
| Recta 10 | Orator 10 |
| Letter Gothic 10/12 | Prestige Elite 12 |
| Script 12 | Mini Gothic 15 |
| Thesis PS | |

**Each £5.25**

Note a selection of the above are also available in French and German typeset
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| 11x9.5 – 2000 1 part plain 60gsm | £13.50 |
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For other quantities please ring

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| LASER LABELS | |
| 2 Across (2000) | £13.50 |
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| Colossus 4 Chess | £14.00 |
| Batman | £11.50 |
| Tomahawk | £14.00 |
| Scrabble | £15.00 |
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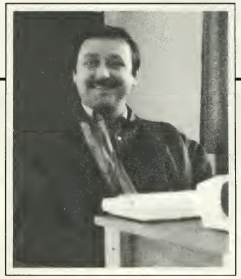
# REWRITING THE HISTORY BOOKS

How the PCW turned Robert Carter's ideas into reality (well, fiction, actually)



When I go to a party and they find out I'm a writer there are two things they always want to know: where I get my ideas from, and how I can make a living writing novels.

The first is the hardest to answer. Sometimes I offer a facetious reply ('Sainsbury's, by the coffee shelves...') then wander enigmatically away. Other times I try telling the truth, and the truth for me is that it's staggeringly hard work getting ideas. A lot of hard thinking, masses of note-taking, a deal of trial and error and, occasionally, if I'm very lucky, a story will materialise. To the writer it seems like magic. Hopefully, when the idea has been developed and committed to paper, it will seem like magic to the reader too. But when your livelihood depends on it, it's too worrying a question to dwell on, in case the magic stops, and likewise the paycheques.

The second question, how to make it pay, is easier to answer. It presupposes you've already answered the first question and that you're competent at practising your craft. (In my case, I'd been writing in an amateur capacity for ten years, getting the odd short story or novelette published, before I started to do it for a living.)

## All fingers and thumbs

OK, you have your idea, and you believe you can carry it off. What then? For me the answer used to be sitting down in front of my Olivetti portable and thrashing out a first, second and third draft, all hand-corrected and retyped, before presenting a reasonably clean final draft to the publisher. Considering that the smallest realistic size for a novel is 60,000 words, four drafts meant around a quarter of a million words of typing. To put in visual terms, a thousand words with Line Spacing set to 2 and proportional or 12 pitch set is roughly equal to three pages of A4. One draft of a slim novel is therefore 180 sheets, and four drafts is 720 sheets. That's a lot when you rely on one finger of your left hand and a finger and thumb on your right!

As if the problem wasn't bad enough, I wanted to write a historical novel set in Elizabethan England, with richly-textured backgrounds and a complex plot, crammed with intrigue and political manoeuvring, *and* I wanted to finish the novel in time to coincide with the 400th anniversary of the defeat of the Spanish Armada. It seemed to me that a final word-count of much less than 240,000 would never do the story justice, and unless I wrote five drafts, I couldn't be sure it would arrive at the publishers in the most polished form. How could I hold down a full-time job at the BBC and type 3,600 manuscript sheets inside a year – ten *every* day?

What could I do?

I searched my soul; it was make or break time. A demon voice at the back of my head told me of all the other BBC boys who'd taken the plunge – Bob Langley, Bernard Cornwell and his superb 'Sharpe' novels – why not go for it?

Then a softer voice told me why. I didn't have a contract, I didn't have a literary agent – who was going to pay the mortgage? How would I eat? Was I crazy?

## Loan arranger

The next day I gave up my job, took out a loan and bought a PCW 8256. My acquaintances told me I was being brave whilst my friends thought I'd gone absolutely barmy.

But I knew better. I'd done some elementary arithmetic. I figured that each draft was no longer a total rewrite – just a rewrite of the parts that needed changing. Probably 50% of the first draft would have to go, 25% of the second, 10% of the third and so on, until finally it would be time to deliver the epic. The further you go with *Armada*, I thought, the easier it'll get.

The logic was good, the decision better. I parted with the bank's money and, filled with hope and self-belief, unleashed my imagination on the green screen. Necessity, so they say, is the mother of invention.

I can honestly say that the whole process quite revolutionised my approach to writing. The first thing was that strange fluency which the PCW gave me. Instantly I had the benefit of total flexibility – if I didn't like the flow of a

### Z88 note

The Z88 is available from any branch of Dixon's and costs £287.50. To transfer files from your Z88 to your PCW you need a serial/parallel interface, the right cables (£9.95) and either the article in last October's 8000 Plus telling how to transfer files using PIP for £0, or some sort of special communications software such as C PORT's Z88-PCW Import/Export Utility (£24.95). Their number is 01 376 5098.

## Master of the Scrolls

**My method of working changed in many subtle ways when I got my PCW, due to the necessity for LocoScript to scroll through a document to get to the end. Usually this is quoted as a bad point; I found it an advantage. At the start of the day I would load up my current chapter of *Armada* – usually one per LocoScript file – and, because the machine presented page one, I would scroll through what I'd written previously, making minor adjustments, so that by the time I reached the last line I'd picked up the threads of the story again. Since a couple of thousand words a day would be added, an extra bonus was that, come the day my 30-page chapter was finished, the first six pages had been combed through five times, the next six four times, and so on...And, when each chapter was finished, I would print it out and hand-correct it wherever I liked – down the pub, on a deck-chair in my back garden, in the jungle house in Kew.**

paragraph I could instantly reorder the sentences, again and again if I wanted, until the best sequence emerged. The same with individual sentences. There was never any scribbling or tipp-exing, nor the temptation to leave an awkward construction because it was too much trouble to alter it. Best of all, no more photocopying at 10p per sheet.

Also, because of this new, easy command over the mechanics of writing, distractions were cut down. It was possible to maintain deeper concentration for longer, and ultimately to immerse myself completely in the fiction – a necessity if the book was to have a feeling of reality.

## You can't take it with you

The sole disadvantage of the PCW in comparison with the old notebook and portable typewriter method is that you have to do your composing in a darkened room. You can't easily take your PCW into the National Maritime Museum or into the Reading Room of the British Library, and it's not really practical to connect your machine to a lawnmower cable and get a tan while working. A real downer when the sun's roasting down just beyond your curtains! No doubt this explains most writers' pallid, wan, locked-in-an-airing cupboard look, I thought. Can I stand another year of this? No colleagues to socialise with, no time off, no paycheque, no human contact?

Then, as I was about to apply myself to the bigger, more exotic successor to my novel, this time set in India, I was saved. I saw the article in last October's 8000 Plus about transferring files from a Cambridge Computers Z88. Straight away I nipped down to Dixon's and checked it out. What a fantastic little brute! A little black rubber mat no bigger than a sheet of A4, no deeper than a matchbox, a portable computer you can stuff into an attaché case. It runs on four walkman batteries – or four rechargeable Ni-Cads if you're cheap like me. It'll do for Kew, I thought, and it's quiet enough for the British Library. I can even take it to India when I research locations for the new novel... The only problem was linking the two computers up; I don't want to know about this lip-smackin', handshakin', VT52 emulatin', 9600 baud ratin' gobbledegook. I'm not an information technologist. I'm not even a Pepsi drinker. I'm a writer.

Then Douglas Adams came to the rescue. No, it wasn't a Babel fish; something more mundane, but just as effective. Adams uses Apple Macintosh gear – he's a complete computer nut, effectively desktop publishing his work right through to the camera ready stage, and he even goes through his scripts to scrub out those annoying hyphens at the end of lines (take a look at a copy of 'Dirk Gently' and see how many you can spot!) – anyhow, his computer consultant, Martin Wilkinson, had written software which allows one computer to talk to the other. I bought the Z88/PCW package, and the requisite hardware (a serial interface box) and my problem was solved. Almost.

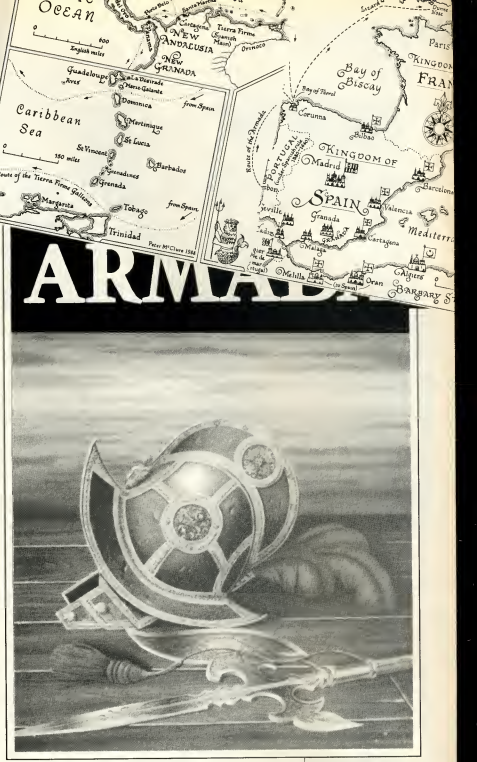
## Thanks for the memory

To be fair, there were a few problems. The first was that an unexpanded Z88 memory is not big enough to allow serious work (just 1,500 words, perhaps half a day's work, at most). I really needed to be able to store a week's work, so had to buy extra memory – a 128k RAM pack. Also, unless I saved the Z88 documents as plain text files the imported software created a LocoScript file with peculiar extraneous codes at the start and finish, and carriage returns at the end of each line. These I quickly learned to comb out using the [CUT] and [EXCH] keys.

So now, I'm able to take my work where I want. This very article was produced on my Z88 during the Easter break, being variously composed on an Inter City 125, my parents' living room, and the boozer, before being transferred to my PCW for final tidying.

If you're interested in writing fiction, or indeed non-fiction, it's a real temptation to think that you need a lot of expensive kit to compete with the professionals, but even the professionals had to begin somewhere. Magazines, publishing houses and agents ask only that submissions are double-spaced on numbered pages, with decent margins on each page and and printed with a reasonably black ribbon. However, even with spell-checked NLQ, presentation alone won't fool anyone; publisher friends tell me that generally the more immaculately typed a submission, the more dire the story, as if the authors are compensating for the shortcomings of the fiction by laboriously dotting every i and crossing every t.

Which brings us back to where we came in. How do you make a living as a novelist? Simple. By telling good stories and telling them well. It's a hard way to earn your bread, it's lonely, it takes years of practice, and no computer on earth can make a good writer. What the PCW can do is to take a whole lot of the agony out of practising. So good luck! ■




### Caught out

Armada, by Robert Carter, is published by Michael Joseph Ltd, and will also appear as a Sphere Books paperback in April 1989. The dedication is to cricketer Mike Gatting, 'a captain courageous in whom the spirit of Drake still lives'. Armada was published before Gatting was stripped of his England captaincy under a cloud of controversy in June.

# BOOK and VIDEO LOOK

Want to know about computer aided design? Or just struggling through LocoScript 2? Two publications that might interest you...

## DESIGNS ON YOUR DESKTOP

**by Harry Atherton**

**£11.95 ● Sigma Press (0625 531035)**

Computer Aided Design, or CAD, is one of those currently popular computing catchphrases. CAD was developed as a tool for the designer or draughter to replace the traditional pencil and paper, the monitor becoming the paper substitute, and the pencil replaced by digitising tablets, light pens, mice and an assortment of other electronic gadgetry. Because new technology now allows CAD to be used on desktop systems like your PCW it has become accessible to a wider group of people.

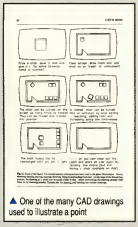
At the outset the author states quite categorically that no mention is made of the particular packages or equipment used in the book. This is a shame considering the number of excellent software packages around – it wouldn't have taken long to phone round and prepare a list.

Harry Atherton begins in a clear and concise manner briefly describing the basics of the computer and all the hardware attachments you might expect to come across when looking toward a CAD system. In a step by step approach he guides you through the aspects of purchasing a CAD system, drawing with it and then editing the drawing. There's an excellent chapter of techniques for correcting mistakes. He particularly explores the 'oops' facility which most packages have to enable you to retract the last operation. The output might be your next hurdle so he briefly describes the numerous collection of printers and plotters that could be at your disposal. Having covered most aspects of getting to grips with CAD Mr Atherton then goes on to explore the avenue of software that can be used in conjunction with it, a prime example being DTP. He keeps the tuition on a light note by constantly using analogies taken from daily life.

The text unravels some of the technical jargon that is so rife in the computer industry and the glossary defines terms used in both that field and the design studio, though by no means all of them. Throughout, technical terms have been highlighted in bold and many of them appear with a definition in the glossary.

This book is not specific to PCWs but if you are a business person with thoughts toward incorporating CAD into your company or a Sunday afternoon user wishing to build a library in your workroom you will find this easy reading. There is plenty of information to ensure that you buy the correct equipment and software for your particular needs together with shortcuts in drawing techniques. Recommended.

**Kim Bale**



▲ One of the many CAD drawings used to illustrate a point

**DESIGNS ON YOUR DESKTOP (ISBN 185 058 0898)**

*8000 PLUS* VALUE VERDICT 5/5

## MASTERING LOCOSCRIPT 2

**£29.95 ● Gateway Videos (01 673 0971)**

One of the most difficult things for all you computer experts to remember is that feeling of panic when you first realised how complicated your PCW really was. Now all the menus and commands in LocoScript are second nature; then they were a confused jumble meaning about as much as dialect Sanskrit.

One company who obviously do remember the trauma and confusion of those first hours in word processing are Gateway Videos who have produced a video to help you through this time.

The title Mastering LocoScript 2 is perhaps slightly misleading. In some ways it does much more, providing an excellent introduction to the 9512 from scratch. It would certainly give confidence in those moments when every time you press [ENTER] you hold your breath in case the machine explodes.

Obviously most readers will be past this stage and as such they would perhaps find the early stages a bit passé. Still, it does give you a fair amount of those jargon terms so beloved by computer people that could so easily be known but not understood. It almost tends to overdo the jargon (quotes like "the printer will now initialise itself" may not be totally helpful) but generally it takes you slowly and systematically through the processes involved in loading LocoScript 2, loading paper in the printer etc.

The other part of its remit – a tutorial for LocoScript 2 – is perhaps less successful. The program is complicated and it is unlikely that you will master the whole range of facilities at one go. Most people approach LocoScript as a process of discovery, adding a little at a time to their accomplishment.

### Play it again and again, Sam

To try to take in two hours of quite concentrated detail can be tiring, especially as the video makers have stuck to the safe option of the actor sitting in front talking to the screen and close ups of LocoScript in action. However as with any video you can replay your favourite bits time and time again. Although it claims to cover the 8000 series everything is done on a 9512 so it obviously suits the new machine owners better.

This does give you a thorough grounding in quite advanced lay-outs, phrases, headers and footers and all those other pet subjects for 8000 Plus LocoScript tutorials. The video will be good for anyone who's just bought a 9512 and knows absolutely nothing or who is nervous of experimenting in Loco 2 themselves.

**Alec Rae**

**MASTERING LOCOSCRIPT 2 (VIDEO)**

*8000 PLUS* VALUE VERDICT 3/5

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As featured in *8000 Plus* – May 1988, Page 7

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**Mailshots are all about communicating one particular message to as wide an audience as possible. LocoMail does that for you, tailoring the contents of each letter to suit – at its most basic, putting in the recipient's name and address. But the program is also capable of much finer adjustments. What happens, for example, if you don't wish to produce a new letter for every record in the data file? For one reason or another, there might be certain people you just don't want to include in the mailshot. Alternatively, you might want the contents of the letter changed for different people. LocoMail lets you do all this...**

# TARGETTING THE SHOT

## Part 2 of our series on LocoMail. Sharon Bradley looks at the conditions...

The best way to understand a selective mail-merge is to look at a few examples. Say, for example, The Drop It and See Repair Company kept on a datafile a list of the names and addresses of PCW owners for whom they had carried out repairs at various times in the past. Now they want to operate exclusively on a system of maintenance contracts; some of those people on the file may already have one, and some may not.

Depending on the information typed in at the Maintenance Contract prompt, the Drop It and See Repair Company will know exactly which customers will benefit from a mail merge letter urging them to take out a maintenance contract. Those who already have one, will obviously not be interested, and therefore they should be omitted from any mail merge. Note how underlines are used in the field names, simply to make them easier to understand.

The simplest solution to this difficulty is to insert a special LocoMail instruction right at the top of the form document which would be in the form of:

```
(+Mail)#Maintenance_Contract="Yes":<:*:>(-Mail)
```

The hash sign begins any conditional statement and is used in exactly the same way as the word "if". The condition being tested in the above statement is the question 'Is the word in the data file under the heading "Maintenance_ Contract" the word "Yes"?' and is equivalent to "If the customer in question already has a maintenance contract....". The action to be taken if the condition is met is encapsulated in the `<:*:>` sequence. The asterisk tells the program to omit the record in question. In other words, if the client whose details are included in this record already has a maintenance contract, no letter will be printed.

Try to remember that strings of characters in a condition (any characters that are not numerals, for example) must be enclosed within quotation marks. Where the condition involves numerals, use of the quotation marks is optional.

It is also possible to test whether a given condition is false. This involves placing the word 'NOT' after the hash sign and before the condition. Don't forget to put the condition itself in between parentheses. Unless the condition is true, a version of the letter will not be made.

For example:

```
(+Mail)#NOT(Maintenance_Contract="No"):<:*:>
(-Mail)
```

– the effect of this is to move to the next record where the existence of a maintenance contract is not "no" (ie. "yes" or "absolutely" or anything else). In effect, you are feeding exactly the same instruction to the program as the former example but in an inversed form.

The equals sign is just one of the symbols you can use to compare two things. If, for example, you run a mail-order company, you may well have a field in each customer record showing the state of their current balance from one month to the next. Using the following symbols would make for a much greater flexibility in the setting up of conditions:

`Balance=0` means that the current balance is equal to zero.
`Balance<>0` tests whether it is not equal to zero.
`Balance<0` means that the action will be carried out if the current balance is less than zero.
`Balance>0` tests whether it is greater than zero.
`Balance>=0` tests whether it is greater than or equal to zero (and the same is true of the < sign).
`100<Balance<200` tests whether the balance is between the two values stated

### Multiple choices

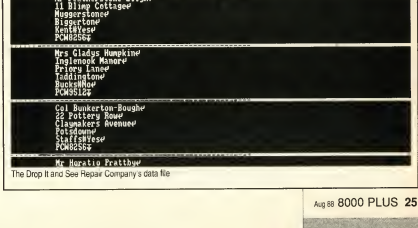
Multiple conditions can be created through the use of AND and OR. If The Drop It and See Repair Company want to encourage specifically the owners of 9512 computers to take out a service contract, then they will need to know which people on the data file own 9512s and which ones do not

### Mail order

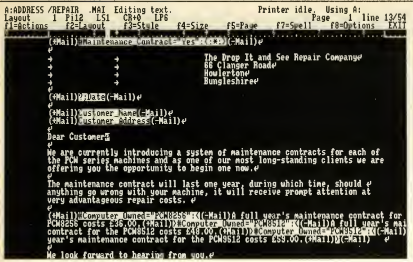
LocoMail is available from Locomotive (0306 740656) for £29.95 – there are different versions for LocoScript 1 and LocoScript 2. 9512 owners have LocoMail free already

## Wild thing

**The use of wildcards is particularly useful when making comparisons using data input from the keyboard. If you type the string "Yes" into the condition we've just examined, when the time came to insert the response you'd be forced to type in the word 'Yes' in order to avoid a syntax mismatch. However, it generally comes more naturally to just press the [Y] key when making an affirmative response, a particularly difficult habit to break for experienced programmers, say. The solution is to use wildcards instead. An asterisk * stands for any string of characters whereas ? means any single character. By inserting "Y*" into the condition, you are then free to type 'Y', or 'y' or 'yes'. Typing in 'Yankeedoodledandy' will also cause the document to be discarded.**



The Drop It and See Repair Company's data file



A:ADDRESS /REPAIR .MAI Editing text. Printer idle, Using A:
Layout 1 Pi12 LS1 CR+0 LP6 Page 1 line 13/54
f1=Actions f2=Layout f3=Style f4=Size f5=Page f7=Spell f8=Options EXIT

(+Mail)#Maintenance_Contract="Yes":<:*:>(-Mail)

The Drop It and See Repair Company
66 Clanger Road
Howlerton
Bungleshire

(+Mail)@Date(-Mail)

(+Mail)Customer_Name(-Mail)
(+Mail)Customer_Address(-Mail)

Dear Customer

We are currently introducing a system of maintenance contracts for each of the PCW series machines and as one of our most long-standing clients we are offering you the opportunity to begin one now.

The maintenance contract will last one year, during which time, should anything go wrong with your machine, it will receive prompt attention at very advantageous repair costs.

(+Mail)#Computer_Owned="PCW8256":<(-Mail)A full year's maintenance contract for PCW8256 costs £36.00.(+Mail)>#Computer_Owned="PCW8512":<(-Mail)A full year's mai contract for the PCW8512 costs £48.00.(+Mail)>#Computer_Owned="PCW9512":<(-Mail) year's maintenance contract for the PCW9512 costs £59.00.(+Mail)>(-Mail)

We look forward to hearing from you.

Standard letter with conditional LocoMail codes

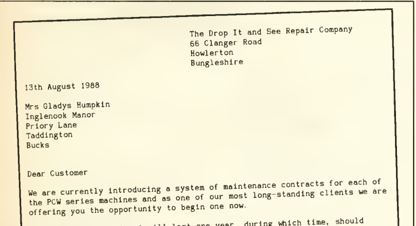
## Dear Wossname

The letter here begins 'Dear Customer', which is a bit naff. Those who have read last month's article will know how to split the names as recorded in the data file (ie Mr, John and Smith separately under title, name and surname) and then get a 'Dear Mr Smith' at the beginning of the letter by havng a line such as Dear (+Mail)title (-Mail) (+Mail)surname(-Mail).

have a contract. The LocoMail command which they insert at the head of their master document will need to contain three conditions instead of one; all the 8256 *and* 8512 owners must be ignored, as well as the 9512 owners already enjoying the benefits of a Drop It and See contract. The command would look something like this:

```
(+Mail)#Computer_Owned="PCW8256" OR
Computer_Owned="PCW8512" AND
Maintenance_Contract="Yes":<:*:>(-Mail)
```

When you use AND in a condition, the consequence (that is, not doing a letter for this item) will only take place if both conditions are met. Using OR on the other hand prompts the program to follow the consequence only if one or other of the conditions is true.



The Drop It and See Repair Company
66 Clanger Road
Howlerton
Bungleshire

13th August 1988

Mrs Gladys Humpkin
Inglenook Manor
Priory Lane
Taddington
Bucks

Dear Customer

We are currently introducing a system of maintenance contracts for each of the PCW series machines and as one of our most long-standing clients we are offering you the opportunity to begin one now.

The maintenance contract will last one year, during which time, should anything go wrong with your machine, it will receive prompt attention at very advantageous repair costs.

A full year's maintenance contract for the PCW9512 costs £59.00.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Mr G. Bloomer
Managing Director

Printout of a selective and conditional mail-merge

To make life even more complicated, multiple conditions can be created in LocoMail using NOT with AND and NOT with OR. Suppose the company wishes to inform all the 8000 series owners who already have taken out contracts with Drop It and See that when the year is up there is going to be an increase in the cost of such a contract, then inserting the following condition is perfectly legal, if not a little tortuous:

```
(+Mail)#Computer_Owned="PCW 9512" AND
NOT(Maintenance_Contract="Yes"):<:*:>(-Mail).
```

In this case, the letter will be abandoned only if the first condition is true *and* the second false. Using combinations like this is very powerful, but also very confusing. It's easy, for example, to end up with exactly what you don't want, and vice versa. You'd be well-advised to go off and do your planning miles away from the keyboard with a clear head before you start your selective merging.

## Take your pick!

Conditional mail-merging allows you to include or omit various sections of text depending on the conditions that you set. It works on the principle that if such and such a condition is met, then this particularly relevant piece of text can be inserted. The command is inserted into the document where you would like to see the text in question appear, not at the top of the document as in the case of selective mail-merge commands. The format of the command is also slightly different:

```
(+Mail)#condition:<(-Mail)text to be included if
condition is met (+Mail)>(-Mail)
```

If The Drop It and See Repair Company wished to include the prices of maintenance contracts for the PCW8256, the PCW8512 and the PCW9512 in its letter depending upon the type of machine that each client owns, then at the appropriate juncture, Mr Bloomer might insert a series of commands like:

```
(+Mail)#Computer_Owned="PCW8256":<(-Mail)A full
year's maintenance contract for the PCW8256
costs
£36.00.(+Mail)>#Computer_Owned="PCW8512":<(-
Mail)A full year's maintenance contract for the
PCW8512 costs
£48.00.(+Mail)>#Computer_Owned="PCW9512":<(-
Mail)A full year's maintenance contract for the
PCW9512 costs £59.00.(+Mail)>(-Mail)
```

Only one of the alternative sections of text can ever be included in a document at any one "pass". When LocoMail finds the condition that matches the information typed in the data-file, it will automatically insert the appropriate sentence and omit all other options.

## Mix 'n' match

So far we've been matching conditions with information that has been stored in the datafile. But LocoMail can also make comparisons on the basis of information input from the keyboard. If the datafile contains only a relatively small number of customers, it is possible that you will recognize instantly the names and addresses as they appear at the top of the form document. That being the case, you will also know whether you want that particular pass to go ahead or not.

Underneath the LocoMail variable names of Customer Name and Customer Address type in the commands

```
(+Mail)Response=?;do you want to abandon this
document(-Mail)
(+Mail)#Response="y*":<:*:>(-Mail)
```

Just as when using the Fill mode, the merge will pause in order for you to type in your response. If you type in 'yes' or more probably 'Y' or 'y' then the document will be discarded and LocoMail will move on to the next record. If on the other hand you just press [ENTER] the merge will go ahead.

LocoMail is a highly versatile program capable of doing many other things. It can, for example, make out invoices doing all the calculations for you, simulate a database or spreadsheet. Such exotic ideas will be covered more fully in the next exciting part of our LocoMail tutorial series. ■

# LocoMail for LocoScript 2

Mr J Smith
24 Larches Rise
New Westering
Wessex

***Use LocoMail to send letters to everyone on your mailing list. Use its many advanced features to do much more –***

▪ Produce letters for each name or data record, or just for a selection ▪ Include special text depending on the data to be merged – each version of your text is correctly laid out, whatever special information you insert ▪ Edit the merged letter before printing ▪ Save the result to disc if required ▪ Use LocoScript data files or ASCII data files from a CP/M program ▪ Prompt for information to be typed at the keyboard ▪ Perform arithmetic within LocoScript documents ▪ Add paragraph numbers automatically ▪ Produce sophisticated LocoMail 'programs' for Invoicing, Credit Control, Enquiries etc. ▪

***LocoMail now comes with a completely revised 288 page User Guide – available separately for users of the PCW9512 and earlier versions of LocoMail.***

▪ An extended tutorial section ▪ Detailed descriptions of the advanced facilities ▪ Worked examples of "program units", loops and conditional operations ▪ Descriptions of typical uses of LocoMail – Club Membership, Invoicing, Enquiries, Labels ▪ A set of "building blocks" to include in your own LocoMail applications ▪ Full technical description of LocoMail ▪ Troubleshooting guide ▪

All the examples described in the User Guide are supplied on the LocoMail master disc. In case you're just buying the new User Guide, they are also supplied on the LocoMail Examples Disc, available separately.

**To: Katy Buchan, Locomotive Software**
**Allen Court, Dorking, Surrey, RH4 1YL**
**Phone (0306) 740606**

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| ☐ | LocoScript 2 with LocoSpell | £34.90 |
| ☐ | *NEW* LocoMail User Guide | £14.95 |
| ☐ | *NEW* LocoMail Examples Disc | £5.00 |
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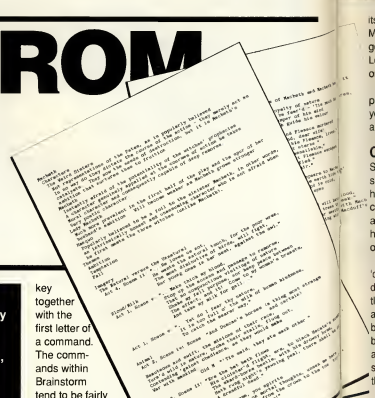
*Note: All prices include VAT and UK postage.*

# ORDER FROM CHAOS

Can your PCW help you think? Sharon Bradley looks at the new improved version of Brainstorm



**Creative thinking is by definition an unstructured, occasionally random, and exclusively human process. No computer, and certainly not your PCW, can have 'ideas'; all it can do is work with material you supply it.**

**Brainstorm is an 'outliner', a program which lets you throw ideas, headings, chunks of text or whole chapters at it in any order or structure. You then use the program to rearrange and impose a structure on what you've done, making order out of inspired chaos. It's been around for a few years, but now the program's authors have released a new version, reconfigured for easier use on the PCW.**

## BRAINSTORM

**£29.99 ● Brainstorm Software Ltd (0895 677845) ● All PCWs**

You use Brainstorm like you make out a shopping list or write out your 'things to do – urgent'. If you were to enter each of your ideas as they occurred to you, those ideas would be stored as a list, one after the other. But Brainstorm's power lies in its use of sub-structures, because each entry or heading in that list is capable of being expanded upon at a lower level into a number of sub-entries or sub-headings. You can further expand each sub-entry into sub-sub-entries, then expand each sub-sub-entry, and so on until the overall structure resembles that of a family tree.

Suppose you are using Brainstorm to write a play about a man with an awful wife; it's called 'Macbeth', say. You'd start with a broad outline, jotting down notes on plot, characters and so on, and expand until the text of the play was written.

On loading the program, the Brainstorm Master Menu is displayed. This stores all the utilities that you're likely to need as you work your way through the program and are simply activated by pressing the first letter key of the utility command (U for Use, C for Clear and so on). U takes you into Brainstorm proper.

The screen display is divided into three parts: the heading window, where you enter the title of the 'model' (Brainstorm's word for the thing you're planning), the main display area where you make all your entries and start building the model, and the command prompt window. If you press the ? key here, help lines appear with a summary of all the most important command keys and their various functions.

### Key facts

Nearly all of the command keys within Brainstorm are activated simply by pressing one key, like [F3], or the [ALT] key together with the first letter of a command. The commands within Brainstorm tend to be fairly straightforward.

The first level of entries – ie. the first few random ideas you have – may well involve the most fundamental aspects of the play that you wish to explore more fully: themes, key characters, plot, imagery, structure etc. These elements are therefore typed in one after the other at the entry prompt as a list.

Having mapped out the general outlines, you would probably want to expand them on a lower, yet more detailed, level. This involves 'promoting' one of the entries so that it assumes the place of the present model title, thus leaving the central display area clear in which to type in further details. If you want to jot down a few notes for the imagery to be used, for example, you 'promote' it to a new heading and can now type in more information concerning the different types of imagery found in Macbeth, like

```
Nature/The Unnatural
Blood/Milk
Animal
Unsexing of woman
```

Having completed this stage, you'll probably need to go back to the first list to do the same for the other entries. This operation is called 'demoting' a heading and is carried out simply by pressing the [F1] key.

You may, on the other hand, wish to carry on delving ever more deeply into the flow of your own thought sequences and expand, in turn, upon the different imagery. By promoting 'Unsexing of woman', for example, you can enter two or three examples of this particular kind of imagery along with details of their precise location in the play.

Under the 'plot' section, you could have an outline of the plot; then you'd expand it, perhaps to a description of the action in each act. You could then give outlines for each scene under each act, and finally enter the dialogue for each scene. You'd end up with the play in various degrees of outline – at the highest level just the title, going down through descriptions of acts and scenes to the dialogue

**For name's sake**

The 'namesake' functions of Brainstorm are more powerful than they're given credit for. For example, if you have a list of names with addresses as sub-entries in one part of the model and an appointments diary in another, any name you write into the appointments list will automatically have the address put in for you as a sub-entry, saving you the trouble of looking it up.

itself. Under 'Act III' you'd have the headings 'Scene 1: Macbeth hires hitmen for Banquo', 'Scene 2: Macbeth getting worried', 'Scene 3: Curtains for Banquo', and so on. Look under Scene 3 and you see the dialogue for that scene on screen.

When you're using your most instinctual thought processes, as you will be when using a program like this, you'll be making constant alterations and revisions. Entries are, therefore, easily edited or deleted once made.

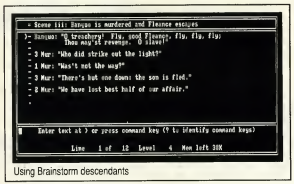
## Call the next descendant

Sooner or later an entry you make in one place will be the same as an entry you make in another - you might have the heading 'three witches' as the title of a scene and in your character list. When this happens, Brainstorm takes note and automatically puts all the descendants (ie, all the sub-headings and successive sub-sub-entries) of the first occurrence under the second one as well.

The advantage of this is that the notes you make under 'characters' will be there when you come to write the dialogue for the scene, and you don't have to jump back to the 'characters' section to remind yourself that the witches are just well-meaning and misunderstood. The match has to be exact though, and 'three witches' and '3 witches' would be different. These 'namesakes' as Brainstorm calls them are indicated on your screen by a number beside the entry saying how many times that heading occurs somewhere in the model.

When you want to find a particular section of your model, there is a search facility. You can look for either a sequence of characters or a part of that sequence enclosed within asterisks. If you wish to call up an example of the animal imagery, say, but are unable to remember it all, type in a sequence that you do remember well (this must be accurate, however).

Type in *shard-borne beetle*, for example, on the 'Search' line and the program will look for the chunk of text in which those words appear. The line in which they appear will be displayed in the title window at the top of the screen; in order to see the whole quote in the central display area,




Using Brainstorm descendants

you 'demote'. The program will ask in a tone of unswerving politeness if this is in fact the string that you want. In the unlikely case that there is more than one 'shard-borne beetle' crawling around the model, you can search for the next occurrence.

## Move it

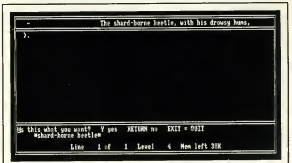
The program is quite a versatile one, which is just as well, when you bear in mind that most people will be using it when in a relatively experimental frame of mind. You can play around with the structure as much as you like, moving sections up or down the hierarchy according to importance. Entries from one part of the model can be detached using Brainstorm's 'Get' facility and imported into another part of the model – for example, you can move the first descendant of the Plot entry into the first line of Structure. Almost immediately the entry from Plot is moved into Structure and assumes the first line in the central display area. This 'Get' facility includes all the descendants of an entry where appropriate. There is also a 'Put' option instead which performs exactly the same function except that the screen into which you are importing remains in front of you. If you try and do something particularly silly or illogical – make an entry a subsection of itself for instance – then the program will stop you from doing it.

You may well feel like printing out your model as a reference document. The program offers quite a variety of layouts for printing although the most straightforward is in the form of an outline, with successive levels indented from the left.

However, for your final draft, you'll want to tidy up the raw-looking text in LocoScript or Protext or whatever. You can save your model (all of it, just certain levels, or just parts you specify) to an ASCII file – a simple text file which you can then insert into a LocoScript document with LocoScript's 'Insert text' option. This combination of Brainstorm for the structuring and LocoScript for the final presentation is a popular one with Brainstorm owners.

## The invisible manual

Where Brainstorm does fall substantially short of other programs is in the presentation of its documentation. Unlike most programs, it is supplied on the disc with the program. Consulting the documentation while the program is up and running is therefore impossible (and that's probably exactly when you're going to need it). The only way around this is to print out huge wads of documentation before you load the program. This is extremely time-consuming (the manual files




Brainstorm's Search facility

are pretty hefty) and involves huge amounts of continuous stationery. It's the program's biggest flaw.

Brainstorm will not provide a miracle cure for the chronically illogical. Neither will it do all the thinking for you and transform you into an overnight Hemingway. What it will do is help you to organize your thoughts and having done that allow you to play around with them in context. It's a little raw-looking nowadays, and not everyone will adapt to its way of working, but for writing and organising ideas it's powerful, much underrated and still unique. ■

### Spot the difference

The new version of Brainstorm has been configured for the PCW keyboard – instead of having to press [ALT]□ to delete forward, you can now press the delete keys for example. The cursors and delete keys work as usual – on old versions you had to make yourself a SETKEYS file to achieve this. The manual has also been rewritten but only appears on disc. Existing Brainstorm owners can upgrade for £9.99 though if you've already worked out a SETKEYS file for yourself there isn't much point.

### Search me

The Search command will find text at the beginning, end and middle of an entry. Through the use of 'wildcards', it allows you to be vague about the sequence of characters you're looking for. The asterisk equals any number of characters and can be used at the beginning, end or both ends of the search term, whilst the question mark is used as a substitute for only one character, search is done regardless of lower or upper case. So, searching for 'be?ties' will find both 'beetles' and 'Beatles'. This facility works quickly regardless of your present position within the model in relation to the sequence that you're looking for.

**PLUSES**

- ▲ Quick and efficient
- ▲ Result can go into word processor to polish
- ▲ Versatile
- ▲ Forces you into structured thinking

**MINUSES**

- ▼ Namesakes must be exact matches
- ▼ Manual on disc – can't consult while using Brainstorm

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **RANGE OF FEATURES** | **3/5** | **EASE OF USE** | **5/5** |
| **PERFORMANCE** | **4/5** | **DOCUMENTATION** | **1/5** |

***8000 PLUS* VALUE VERDICT 4/5**

# DOWN TO BUSINESS

## Using your PCW for business, or thinking about it? Andrew Bibby tells you what you need to know

**Come on, admit it. You've also had that great idea for a computer program to sell, or a series of articles to write, or some other brainwave that's going to make you a million. There's never been a better time to start up your own small business, and your PCW is the ideal business resource – it can handle your accounts, do all your mailshots, keep customer records and so on. And, if you're creating a program or writing, of course it's the tool of your trade.**

**No-one can tell you how to have good ideas – but quite a few can help with the business side of things...**

The young man selling me the PCW paused as he wrote out the credit card slip. "It's a lot of money, isn't it", he said finally as I signed. And, yes, I had to agree it was. Of course, compared with some of the prices charged by a certain American computer multinational, the PCW hardly costs anything at all. But nevertheless few of us part with several hundred pounds without careful consideration.

What an increasing number of PCW owners are finding, however, is that their Amstrad can quickly become an investment – in the technical sense that it can be used to generate additional income. Whether your secret talent is for writing articles or writing software, you may quickly find that your Amstrad is, as they say, a nice little earner.

Your first thought as you bank the cheques may be to celebrate in style. But pause before you get too carried away. Those cheques are a sign that you are now engaged in a business activity – and that, be warned, has a number of important implications.

This is supposed to be the age of initiative and enterprise, when anyone can find fulfilment (and financial reward) by running their own business. Believe some of the media hype, and you could believe that nothing is easier than working for yourself. In fact, the reality can be very different, as any business adviser – or tax collector – could tell you.

### Brass tax

Perhaps tax is a good subject to consider first. Many people when they start in business have a vague anxiety about taxation matters, which often becomes focused on the dreaded subject of VAT. It's true that Value Added Tax can be a time-consuming headache for small businesses. However, unless the turnover from your business is above the annual threshold (currently £22,100), it's not VAT you need to worry about – it's income tax and national insurance.

The fact is that even that £5 you were given for the article you and your PCW wrote for the local Cat-Fanciers' Chronicle and Courier is, technically, income you have earned, and as such is liable to income tax. It's your responsibility to report any earnings like this to the Inland Revenue – you can't just sit back and wait for them to ask you!

The vast majority of us – those of us who are employees – have our income tax automatically taken care of through the Pay-As-You-Earn system. It's the employer's duty to deduct the correct amount of tax and national insurance from each employee's pay, and to forward this money to the government. The PAYE system is designed to ensure that the annual amount of tax due is deducted proportionally, throughout the year, each time we get a pay packet or salary cheque – and the system is built around the tax coding

### Comms ci, comms ça

You may find that some of the business services you require can be obtained by you, courtesy of your PCW. If you are linked up to the world of electronic communications, through a modem and your telephone socket, you'll be able to consider the home and office banking packages offered by a number of the banks, including the Bank of Scotland and the Royal Bank of Scotland. If it's small business information you're after, Micronet offer a 'Money Extra' service (formerly known as Bizzinet), while a similar service is planned to begin shortly via Prestel.

which every employee is given, and which records all the tax allowances, etc, to which they are entitled.

For example, a single person is currently entitled to £2,605 each year tax-free, so that someone entitled just to this allowance would be given a coding of 260L; a married man, on the other hand, can claim the first £4,095 of his income tax-free as his Married Man's Allowance, and this would be reflected in a tax coding of 409H.

## You PAYEs your money

Pay As You Earn means that most of us only need to think about income tax once a year, and then only if we're sent a tax return to fill in. The purpose of the tax return in these circumstances is primarily to fine-tune the PAYE procedure, so that the tax coding is adjusted to allow for any minor under- or over-payments of tax we may have made during the year.

With earnings from business activities and self-employment, however, the tax return becomes more important, for it's the place to declare the profits you have made. If you're not sent one automatically, the onus is on you to ask for one.

The Inland Revenue distinguish between casual earnings and income you get more regularly as a result of a trade, profession or vocation. If, for example, you developed a unique data-base program on your PCW to catalogue your collection of Elvis Presley memorabilia, which you then sold to half a dozen friends in your fan club, then fairly clearly this would count as purely casual income. Or if you have been paid for a few articles, but don't undertake regular journalistic work, then again you would report this as income from casual work.

If however this income comes in on a regular basis, whether or not you have another 'real' job which you do, then the Inland Revenue are likely to treat your earnings as coming from a business which you run. (As we'll see, you may also incur an additional liability to pay National Insurance contributions).

## Expenses, expenses

Income tax, as most people know, was reduced to two rates for the current (1988-9) tax year in the last Budget, the standard 25% which most of us pay, and the higher rate at 40% for any individual or married couple earning over £19300. However, you don't necessarily pay tax on everything which your PCW has helped you earn. For a start, you may not have fully used up your personal tax allowances, which give you at least £2605 tax-free each year (though anyone in employment is likely to have their allowances already set against their PAYE deductions).

# Disc jockeying

If you want to sell a program you've written commercially, obviously you can't just make copies one by one on your PCW if you aim to sell more than the odd dozen or two: you'll need to go to a specialist disc copying service. There are a number of companies offering various package deals; you can just send them the master and they will provide discs with your software copied onto them. They will also include packaging, disc labels, even security numbering.

Prices for the 3" discs the PCW uses are around £2 per disc (down to £1.60 if your order is in the thousands) plus anything from 10p to 50p per package depending on how glamorous you want it – the standard 'video film' style plastic case will be somewhere in between these figures. A list of companies who provide these services can be found occasionally in the computer trade newspaper, *CTW*. One such company is Disc Copy on 0604 767 261.

For the manual you'll have to approach a printer – most high street outfits would be happy to do it, and of course you can prepare it all ready for the printer's camera using good old LocoScript.

# Carrying your VAT

VAT is administered by Customs and Excise, and not by the Inland Revenue. It's a tax on the final consumer, normally at 15%, though some items have a 0% rate of VAT, and others are completely exempt from the VAT net.

VAT-registered businesses have to add VAT at the appropriate rate to the goods or services they sell, but they can claim back any VAT they've paid on their 'inputs' (business expenses) – so it's only consumers or non-registered businesses who are clobbered by the tax.

Any business with a turnover above the VAT threshold (£22100) must register for VAT, and impose the tax on their customers. If your business is below this threshold, there are occasions when it is worth considering voluntary registration.

But tax is also calculated not on your business *income*, only on your taxable profits. What this means is that you can deduct most of the expenses you incur in running your business first. These aren't just the obvious ones – like the cost of the discs used for copying that Presley database, or the typing paper bought to write your articles. If you work from home, you can also include the proportion of your ordinary household bills – electricity, gas, phone, etc – which reflects your business usage of these services.

Similarly, if you sometimes use your car for business use, you can include an appropriate proportion of its running costs as a business expense. Other allowable expenses include advertising, delivery charges, relevant books and subscriptions, materials, accountancy fees and some legal expenses.

## Record time

The golden rule is to keep records of everything you purchase for business use. Even if it's only a packet of envelopes, make sure that you ask for a receipt, and then keep it safe. Though there will always be some people who try to fiddle their tax return, there's equally many others who pay too much tax, simply because they forget to include all their allowable expenses when working out their tax bill.

Get into the habit of keeping a simple account book up-to-date with all your business income and expenditure recorded: if you find the prospect of book-keeping daunting, there are various simple account books, such as the Collins Self-Employed Account Book or the Simplex D cashbook, which you can buy off-the-shelf in your high street stationers.

Your Amstrad PCW itself, and any other *capital* items you may acquire for your business – machinery, vans, furniture, etc – are treated a little differently for tax purposes. You are not allowed to offset the full cost of the purchase of these items against your first year income: the theory is that capital items contribute to your profits over several years of business.

Instead, you are entitled to claim *capital allowances* for

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**MONEY MANAGER PLUS** is very much easier and faster to use than ordinary systems. It has several reporting, analysing and graphic facilities not available in even the most expensive accounting systems. It would take you months of effort with a sophisticated database/spreadsheet/graphics package to achieve half of what **MONEY MANAGER PLUS** can. Whether you run a substantial business or just need to sort out your personal finances, **MONEY MANAGER PLUS** can help you.

To run the system you just switch on, load **MONEY MANAGER PLUS**, and select a data file to be loaded from your disc into the system. You can then make new entries in any order that suits you (or amend existing entries). You can reconcile entries against bank statements received. You can produce your own statements and reports (including graphical charts) with amazing variety and selectivity to answer any questions you might have about your current financial situation. You then save the data file for the next time you need to use it. You may have any number of separate data files (or sets of accounts) covering several years, and store several on one disc. When required, a 12-month data file can be rolled forward by a month at a time.

- *12 months accounts per file, 300 entries per month*
- *Up to 9 user-defined accounts (banks, cash, credit cards etc)*
- *Up to 50 user-defined classes of income/expenditure*
- *Optional reference (up to 6 characters) for each entry*
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these items. These are national business expenses to allow for what is popularly known as depreciation. Every capital item you buy is added to a 'pool' for accounting purposes, and each year you can claim 25% of the value of this pool. So, for example,if your PCW 9512 cost you £500, you could offset against tax a capital allowance of £125 in the first year. In year two, the allowance would be 25% of the remaining value (£375), or £93.75, and so on, year by year. (Of course, if you also use your Amstrad for personal use, then only a proportion of the capital allowance is claimable.)

## A-Z of NI

Employees have no choice but to pay their income tax week by week or month by month, whenever they are paid. If you're in business, you have a lot more flexibility, and you won't have to pay any tax you owe for some time – in some circumstances, for almost two years, if you finish your own accounting year just after the end of the government tax year on 5 April. In the meantime, you can enjoy what is in effect an interest-free loan from the government – though remember that in the end you'll need to have the money available, when the tax demand finally comes in.

It's not only income tax you need to bear in mind. There's also the thorny question of National Insurance to think about. Self-employed people are liable for Class 2 National Insurance contributions if they run a business or follow a regular profession, even if they're already paying the more common Class 1 contributions, as an employee in another job elsewhere. Furthermore, additional Class 4 contributions are payable on taxable profits from self-employment of between £4750 and £15860.

If however your self-employed earnings are below the National Insurance threshold, currently £2250, you can apply to the DHSS for exemption from Class 2 payments: and if your income is purely from occasional casual work, then no NI liability should be incurred.

It may be by this stage that you are pulling your hair, and desperately scouring the yellow pages for the address of an accountant. A good accountant can help you, not just by giving you advice on the financial side of your business, but by pointing out additional expenses you may have incurred which can be set against any tax due. But even a tolerant accountant may have their patience stretched if you haven't understood the importance of careful record-keeping.

## Being a boss

Don't be disheartened. Large numbers of people successfully run their own businesses, and many don't just earn their own living, but also in the process employ other people. If your business does take off and you take staff on to help you, don't forget that you are now their employer. When you pay them, you'll have to ensure that their tax and national insurance are deducted first, which means that you'll need to ask your local tax office to send you the necessary documents and tax tables to be able to operate a Pay-As-You-Earn system. You'll also have to tussle with the complexities of the Statutory Sick Pay system, for the times when your staff are off through ill-health.

You'll also be taking on other responsibilities as an employer; in most cases, for example, your employees have a right to be given a written employment contract within thirteen weeks of starting work. In any case, it makes sense to have the terms and conditions of their employment clearly set down on paper, and signed.

You'll also need to take out an Employer's Liability insurance policy, and to ensure that you are meeting any relevant health and safety legislation.

## Help

All in all, there's a lot to find out. Fortunately, there are now an increasing number of places to turn for assistance. The government, through the Small Firms Service, has its own team of advisors, able to offer free initial assistance. You may also find that your town has its own business advice centre, ready to help. There are also a number of training courses available. Your local library will almost certainly have details of the so-called BEP (Business Enterprise Programme) courses, which are funded by the Manpower Services Commission.

If you're unemployed, under notice of redundancy, or prepared to become unemployed for a short time before starting your business, you'll want to find out more about the Enterprise Allowance Scheme. Under the EAS, the government will pay you £40 a week for the first year of a new business. The rules are relatively straightforward, but you do need to have at least £1000 available for your business, and it must be a brand-new venture you are launching.

It's worth taking time to research exactly what assistance your business may be able to get. Sometimes, help can come from unlikely quarters. If you are considering entering the mail order market, for example (let's say you suddenly realise just how many Presley fans are out there wanting your product), the Post Office currently offer a number of introductory schemes, which may include the chance to do your first mail-shot free of charge. Contact the business mail order representative at your local Post Office for more details. ■

### Voyage of the enterprise

The government's Small Firms Service is run through the Department of Employment in England, and by the Scottish and Welsh Development Agencies. To contact your nearest office and arrange a free interview dial 100 and ask for 'Freephone Enterprise'.

# Shopping list

**Your PCW can handle all the boring side of your business admin. LocoScript, of course, is great for business documents, contracts, press releases all your and correspondence; set up a few standard letters as TEMPLATE.STDs and your writing time will be cut at a stroke. In fact, you can use LocoScript as a rudimentary name-and-address database just by keeping them stored in separate files, for example – Loco's disc manager will then keep them all in alphabetical order for you and you can insert individual names-and-addresses into letters by using the 'Insert text' facility.**

**If you send out a lot of letters though you'll need a mail merger – the thing which takes the names and addresses from a file and writes a letter to your specifications for each one, inserting the name and address appropriately in each letter. This can save you hours of typing individual letters and looks much classier than a photocopied standard letter. LocoMail is ideal for this (£19.95 from Locomotive, 0306 740606). 9512 owners have that already of course, and Protext owners have a very flexible and powerful mail merger built in to their word processor.**

**A daisywheel printer is one investment you may well consider if you have an 8000 machine and think the 'near letter quality' print is not quite impressive enough for your company press releases. These produce genuine letter quality documents, as good as the ouput from an electric typewriter – and can be had for £200 or so upwards. There are plenty advertised in 8000 Plus. You will also need a serial:parallel interface to connect your printer to the PCW with, and LocoScript 2 which can print directly with external printers.**

**Accounts can be handled either by a specialist accounts package or by a spreadsheet. Accounts packages, depending on their complexity, replace anything from cash books recording incomings and outgoings, up to double entry book-keeping systems. For non-VAT businesses Money Manager Plus is ideal (£39.95, Connect Systems, 01-743 9792) while for larger concerns something like NewStar' Small Business Accounts (£69.95, Total Office Software, 0277 220573) or Digita's Business Controller (£99.95, 0395 45059) would be suitable. You can alternatively write your own accounts controller with a spreadsheet program such as SuperCalc 2 (£49.95, Amsoft, 091 567 3395) Cracker Turbo (£49.95, NewStar, 0277 220573) which also does graphs and bar charts, or the spreadsheet on the five-program Mini Office suite (£29.95, Database, 0625 878888). 8000 Plus is currently running a series showing how to write your own accounts package in this way. Stock control packages exist for the PCW, though again you can write these yourself on a spreadsheet.**

**You'll want a customer list for invoicing purposes – an ideal job for a database. Again, Mini Office contains a database (and a mail merger too, so for under thirty pounds you're getting a lot of software!) and other programs which are ideal for keeping customer records are Masterfile 8000 (£49.95, Campbell Systems, 0378 77762) or AtLast 2 (£39.95, Rational Solutions, 0566 81511). For very complex invoicing and record keeping tasks you might look at dBase II, a database programming language (£99.00, Ashton, 07357 5244).**

**Overall, Mini Office will do most of the things you'd want for a small business and at under £30 is an investment well worth looking into.**

NEW !

# INVEST WITH PRO-PUNTER

061 330 0184

Pro-Punter

* NOW, you can turn your PCW into an expert racing adviser

* **PRO-PUNTER** is a sophisticated, disc-based expert computer system for home micros which ACCURATELY interprets horse racing form

* In extensive trials over both **FLAT AND NATIONAL HUNT** seasons
57% of horses top-rated by **PRO-PUNTER** won, representing an average post-tax PROFIT per race of 80% of capital invested
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* Researched and developed over three years **PRO-PUNTER** uses information from the racing press and analyses **ALL** major aspects of racing form.

* Produces a **RACE FORECAST**, generates a **COMPUTER S.P.**, highlights good and poor **VALUE BETS** and **OFFERS INVESTMENT ADVICES**

* **PRO-PUNTER** adjusts automatically to the race under analysis. You don't need to be an expert yourself

* Since its launch in May 1987, proofing to the racing press has resulted in a profit in excess of 90 level-stake points over 100 races and a strike-rate in excess of 50%

* Available now for the AMSTRAD PCW range, Amstrad PC/PPC PC/IBM COMPATIBLES, CPC6128, ATARI ST, BBC

**PRO-PUNTER** is a menu-driven and very easy to use once you have found your way around the racing press. The user is led logically from one input stage to another until data is ready for analysis. Perhaps its most exciting feature is that it actually tells the user whether or not to bet on the top-rated horse. Solid investment advices can be very profitable: at the time of going to press 22 investment advices from forecasts proofed to the racing press had resulted in 17 winners with a return on capital investment of almost 100%

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*".....Technology to beat the bookies." Raceform Handicap Book, May1987*
*".....the intitial investment in a profitable enterprise. ..." Acorn User, October 1987*
*".....has the potential to turn bookie-bashing into an art form." Micro User, 1988*
*".....confound the sceptics." 8000 + March 1988.*
*".....technically a first class package "Computing with Amstrad PCW, April 1988*

***PRICES £57.50 including VAT, P&P (please specify machine). Orders and enquiries to:**
**DGA (8000+) SOFTWARE, PO BOX 36, ASHTON UNDER-LYNE, LANCS OL7 9AJ**

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| Accoustic Hoods for your printer | POA |
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| Pace RS232 Ser/Par Interface | 54 95 |
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| **Pace Bundled packs for the PCW** | |
| Nightingale + Interface + Cable | 149 95 |
| Linnet + Interface + cable | 194 95 |
| Series Four 1200S + Interface | 399 95 |
| Series Four 2400S + Interface | 489 95 |
| **Pace - Modems only** | |
| Nightingale Manual, V21/V23 | 94 50 |
| Linnet-Intelligent, V21/V23 | 149 95 |
| Series Four 2123S | 259 50 |
| Series Four 1200S | 379 95 |
| Series Four 2400S, V22 & V22bis | 469 95 |
| **Miracle Technology Modems** | |
| WS2000, Manual Dial Modem | 108 70 |
| WS4000PCW, c/w Interface | 169 95 |
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WS3000 Was 'Peripheral of the year' in 1986 **British microcomputing Awards**

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| ★ Spec. 48 / 128k Cadmaster | 17 95 ★ |
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| ★ Graph Pro Pack - Cassette | 27 95 ★ |
| ★ Graph Pro Pack - 3" Disc | 35 95 ★ |

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| Locoscript II | 19 45 |
| Locospell | 33 25 |
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| Tasprint 8000 | 11 75 |
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| Supercalc II | 39 75 |
| Cracker II (Included Graphs) | 38 75 |
| Mini Office Professional system | 21 75 |
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### DATABASES

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### ACCOUNTS

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If you are unsure exactly which package you need for your particular business please 'phone and we will describe the strengths and weaknesses of the various packages in clear jargonless terms but leave you to decide

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

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| PPAY - Payroll | 37 25 |
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| Popular Accounts Super | 149 00 |
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| Arnor Maxam II | 52 75 |
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| Borland - Turbo Pascal | 49 75 |

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## JOB ESTIMATING & PRODUCT COSTING (new version)

**£79.90 each ● Cornix Software Ltd (0462 682989) ● All PCWs**

These are rewrites from scratch of the original programs which have been around for a year or two now, claiming more routines, faster operation, and much greater storage space than the old version. They also can be installed specifically for 8256, 8512 or 9512 to use each machine to its capacity. Although both packages are ultimately aimed at the small but expanding businessman, they cater for the needs of two very specific areas: manufacturing and contracting.

Product Costing provides you with full control of your selling prices in relation to the various fluctuations in cost involved in manufacturing a product. Job Estimating, on the other hand, is an efficient and accurate way of producing estimates based on the various cost elements.

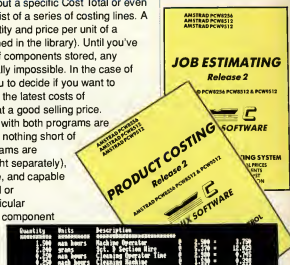
Both programs have a main menu through which the user can access both a component library and a further costings menu. A component is defined as being any element that incurs a cost in manufacturing a product or in carrying out a job. The component library stores the details of all those elements (like labour and raw materials) that are likely to be required. Details that need to be entered are things like component type (for example, GLD=GOLD), description of the component (0011 GOLD LINK), unit of measure (say, mg) and lastly the cost of the component per unit (eg. £2.50).

The programs then draw on the information stored in the component library to work out all the subsequent costings. The Job Estimating component library is slightly different, requesting the cost price per unit (the price at which the contractor buys a bathroom cabinet, say) and the unit's selling price (the price at which you include it in an estimate).

### Two programs whose titles actually tell you what they do? Whatever next...

The programs then work out a specific Cost Total or even Job Total, both of which consist of a series of costing lines. A costing line records the quantity and price per unit of a required component (as defined in the library). Until you've got a reasonable collection of components stored, any costing exercise will be virtually impossible. In the case of Product Costing, it's up to you to decide if you want to add a percentage mark-up to the latest costs of production in order to arrive at a good selling price.

The user guides supplied with both programs are thorough, lucid and basically, nothing short of excellent. Although the programs are expensive (they can be bought separately), they are surprisingly versatile, and capable of accessing either a detailed or summarised analysis of a particular costing on the basis of either component type, unit or selling price. They will be a godsend for any small to medium business and will save a lot of wading through a waist-high jungle of paper. ■

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|---|---|---|---|
| **RANGE OF FEATURES** | **4/5** | **EASE OF USE** | **5/5** |
| **PERFORMANCE** | **4/5** | **DOCUMENTATION** | **5/5** |
| ***8000 PLUS* VALUE VERDICT** | **4/5** | | |

## INDEXER

**£22.95 ● Comma Consultants Ltd (0793 852497) ● All PCWs**

Whatever sort of writing you're into, Indexer is one of those programs that might prove useful to have around. Left to its own devices, it will create an alphabetical list of (nearly) all the words you have used in a given report or chapter, together with the number of the pages on which the word appeared.

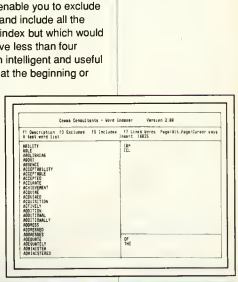
If, for example, you were forced into writing a thesis on Small Ruminant Research, the program will inform you that the word 'gerbil' appears on pages 1, 4, 8, 9 and so on. Of course, an indexing system like this is primarily for the benefit of the eventual receivers of your thesis, but the program also provides you, the writer, with a swift and efficient system of checking out references whilst actually in the throes of compiling it.

It's unlikely that you'll get the best out of the program unless you're using quite a hefty piece of text. If the original text document is a Protext or LocoScript file, then it must be first of all translated into a Page Image file using ASCII. On feeding various information into the program (it's sensible, for example, not to bother processing words that have less than four letters) an index will be created to your specifications, for example of all the words in the text which have four or more letters in them.

You are also free to decide whether you want the program to observe an upper/lower case distinction, or whether you want phrases to be 'processed' or not: all this means is that the phrase 'Institute of Ruminology' would be indexed just as one entry, instead of as three individual word entries.

The program's Special Word Lists enable you to exclude all the words you're not going to need and include all the words that you would find useful in an index but which would otherwise be ignored because they have less than four letters. All this fine-tuning makes for an intelligent and useful index which you can then insert either at the beginning or end of your original document.

Unfortunately, running the program involves an awful lot of disc-swapping. The accompanying User Guide is also pretty abysmal, chiefly due to glib assumptions and ambiguous inconsistencies of terminology on the part of its writers. But as with most things, it's fairly easy once you know how and will probably be of real use to the writer who ends up wasting valuable time flicking through endless pages in hot pursuit of cryptic allusions to various small ruminants. ■

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|---|---|---|---|
| **RANGE OF FEATURES** | **2/5** | **EASE OF USE** | **2/5** |
| **PERFORMANCE** | **4/5** | **DOCUMENTATION** | **1/5** |
| ***8000 PLUS* VALUE VERDICT** | **3/5** | | |

# MASTERFILE 8000

FOR ALL AMSTRAD PCW COMPUTERS

MASTERFILE **8000**, the subject of so many enquiries, is now available.

MASTERFILE **8000** is a totally new database product. While drawing on the best features of the CPC versions, it has been designed specifically for the PCW range. The resulting combination of control and power is a delight to use.

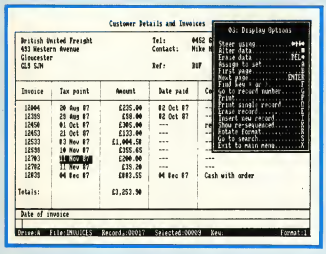
Other products offer a choice between fast but limited-capacity RAM files, and large-capacity but cumbersome fixed-length, direct-access disc files. MASTERFILE **8000** and the PCW RAM disc combine to offer high capacity with fast access to variable-length data. File capacity is limited only by the size of your RAM disc.

A MASTERFILE hallmark is the provision of multiple, user-designed display formats. This flexibility remains, but now it's even easier. With MASTERFILE **8000** you design your formats "live"; no more questionnaires, just move your format effects around the screen using the cursor keys!

Record updating is even easier than before — just steer your cursor to any field on the screen and then insert/erase/alter as required.

Special options are provided for handling dates and surnames, and column totals can be generated.

All screen work is done graphically — and hence we offer unique panel, box, and ruled line options. Choose the line spacing at pixel resolution — you will be amazed how much clearer 9-pixel lines are than the usual 8-pixels. (Study the picture.) And all this faster than CP/M normally lets you paint the screen! PCW printer functions, under menu control, are provided.

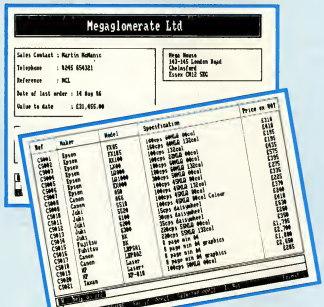



Keyed files are maintained automatically in key sequence, with never any need to sort. You can have unkeyed files too, where records can be inserted at any point in the file.

Any file can make RELATIONAL references to up to EIGHT read-only keyed files, the linkage being effected purely by the use of matching file and data names.

You can import/merge ASCII files (e.g. from MASTERFILE III), or export any data (e.g. to a word-processor), and merge files. For keyed files this is a true merge, not just an append operation. By virtue of export and re-import you can make a copy of a file in another key sequence. New data fields can be added at any time.

File searches combine flexibility with speed. (MASTERFILE **8000** usually waits for you, not the other way around.) You can even assign subsets of a file into one or more of seven pigeon-holes for subsequent reference or further manipulation.




FIELD-TO-FIELD CALCULATION is available, using any mixture of terms and arithmetic operators + — * / ( ).

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# WORDS & PICTURES

In essence desktop publishing is the ability to mix words and pictures on a page. With the PCW the words are no problem – the pictures can be. Alec Rae investigates

**All the DTP programs available have a selection of clip-art (ready-made images that you can use in your pages) from which hopefully you might find a drawing that suits. And all provide a variety of fonts to make your headlines more interesting.**

**But once you have produced the West Penge Train Spotter's Bi-Monthly Newsletter for a year or so, you could quickly become bored with the images available that are really suitable to your publication. Hence the number of small companies offering you add-on packages for your desktop publishing program...**

Add-on packages for desktop publishing programs have been flooding on to the market filled with digitised pictures, cartoons and useful symbols that you can use to brighten up your pages. Some even have extra fonts with the designers going wild to think up new exotic names to go with the hopefully new and exotic letters.

However this is one area where you really have to tread carefully. It seems to be virtually impossible to produce a range of clip art images that will appeal to everyone (witness the widely differing subject matter between each of the discs) so it is perhaps worthwhile to check first that you are actually going to get some pictures that will be useful.

## HD COMPUTER AIDED GRAPHICS

**£7.99 ● HD CAD Design (04867 81394)**

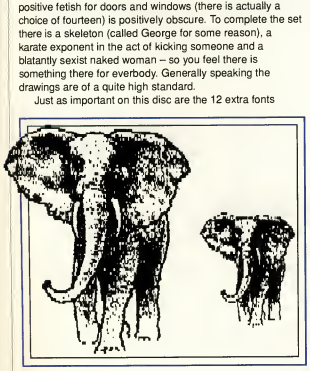
**● Stop Press**

HD have perhaps tackled an easy and yet difficult market by producing this disc for Stop Press, the best of the graphics packages with probably the best existing choice of fonts.

The clip art varies quite widely in quality. There are a couple of digitised photographs of dog's head that are quite impressive while some of the drawn faces are positively amateurish. Luckily Stop Press provides excellent facilities to improve them if you want and it is obviously easier to modify someone else's drawing than to start from scratch.

The variety of subject is quite wide although the logic is not totally obvious. What you would use the illustration of a fly or a door knocker for is not immediately obvious and the positive fetish for doors and windows (there is actually a choice of fourteen) is positively obscure. To complete the set there is a skeleton (called George for some reason), a karate exponent in the act of kicking someone and a blatantly sexist naked woman – so you feel there is something there for everbody. Generally speaking the drawings are of a quite high standard.

Just as important on this disc are the 12 extra fonts available. For extra fonts these are all quite sensible and legible. They have the advantage of being designed on a 36 by 36 pixel grid which does give a quite good resolution even when you blow it up to the bigger sizes.



## HEADLINES

**£7.99 ● WaddSoft (227 Church Rd, Lytham St Annes, Lancs FY8 3NN)**

**● The Desktop Publisher**

Although largely taken up with fonts and a complete letter set for 'pasting' into place, Headlines does have three sheets of illustrations to cut and paste into your pages.

This is good thinking as the Desktop Publisher has about the worst graphics of the DTP packages and it is almost impossible to produce your own drawings. One problem is that the program reverses everything on screen so that it is difficult to see how good a piece of clip art is until you have printed it out. It is also easy to distort the picture, making the more realistic illustrations look quite bizarre.

Having said this the disc gives you quite a variety of subjects in all three picture files. There is a sports file, with quite well drawn action pictures or symbols to illustrate virtually every sport from snooker to American football.

The 'Faces' file concentrates on people and here the contrast between the cartoons and the serious line drawings is more marked. However again the choice of subject is vast and varied although how often the picture of Henry VIII will be used is debatable. The last sheet, rather cryptically called 'Hands' is filled with useful if imperfectly drawn symbols.

Also on the disc are 12 fonts languishing under rather

### Digitise it

If you are really taking desk top publishing seriously you will obviously want to go the whole hog and acquire a digitiser or a scanner so that you can capture the exact image you want from the TV screen or from a picture.

Even this will cause problems however. By the time a picture has been reduced into pixels (individual blobs on the screen) a great deal of detail will have been lost. You may find that what looks like a perfect image on the TV screen looks a little like a snow storm on the Russian Steppes by the time it has been digitised. You may still need to do a fair amount of touching up to get it into a recognisable form.

**HD COMPUTER AIDED GRAPHICS**

***Useful for:*** **travel, animals, doors and windows.**

***8000 PLUS* VALUE VERDICT 4/5**

**HEADLINES**

***Useful for:*** **sport, people and symbols**

***8000 PLUS* VALUE VERDICT 3/5**

# DIY clip-art

**Most desktop publishing packages have some sort of facility to 'draw' your own graphics although these vary widely in their effectiveness. Anyway freehand drawing with a mouse is a skill that needs practice and is extremely time consuming.**

**Some DTP programs have quite sophisticated graphics utilities that will allow you to reverse, rotate or generally alter the clip art you already have. It is well worth exploring these facilities as it is amazing the new lease of life you can give to a well worn picture just by overprinting a design or even merging it with another picture.**

unlikely names like Yuppie, Spooky and Sausage. Admittedly there are quite pleasant fonts on this list although there are some which could only be described as idiosyncratic (especially Yuppie, which must tell us something).

They all suffer from the fact that, like the Desktop Publishers own fonts, they are designed on a 16 by 16 pixel grid which means that they are inclined to be markedly jagged or 'stepped'. Probably more useful is the alphabet of single letters which you can paste one at a time to make your headlines. These are simple no nonsense capital letters but they give you such a superior quality resolution that you would probably be prepared to accept the extra time and effort involved.

## MR DTP GRAPHIC LIBRARY

**£12.50 - £14.50 ● Mr DTP (32a Rumburgh Rd, Lowestoft, Suffolk N32 4JL)**
**● The Desktop Publisher**

If you want to acquire a complete library of images for the Desk Top publisher you could acquire all three clip art discs from Mr DTP. But it will cost you. Buy all three at the same time and it will set you back £12.50 each while £14.50 only buys one.

Certainly taking into account the price differential these discs do not represent a bargain. They only have two files on each disc, the files only take up one side and they concentrate solely on clip art (no fonts).

Having said that they undoubtedly do provide a thorough choice of images. With the extra space to fill they have crammed the sheets with hundreds of small drawings and symbols.

There are sheets on specific subjects including transport animals and sport but even the general files do specialise in specific subjects. One general file has all the signs of the zodiac and every musical instrument you could think of while, the other is packed with toys, eating and cooking utensils and tools. Whether you would find this choice of subjects useful has to be a very personal decision.

Although most clip art collections have a section on sports Mr DTP is the only one to do it really systematically. Each sport is portrayed in boxes all the same size and style – ideal for a sports page where you could head up each column with the correct illustration.

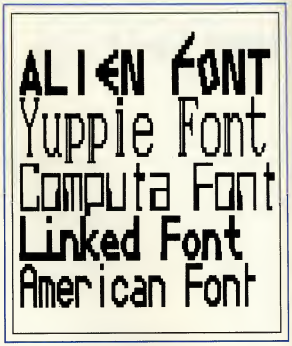
**Pop pictures**
Next to sports the most popular subject for clip art seemed to be animals (although there was no example of a llama or a gerbil on any of the discs). After that the most popular subject had to be transport.

**MR DTP GRAPHIC LIBRARY**
***Useful for:*** **sport, transport, wild animals, symbols, musical instruments, toys and tools.**

**8000 PLUS VALUE VERDICT 2/5**

**ELECTRIC STUDIO SNIP ART (6 discs)**
***Useful for:*** **sport, leisure, travel and nature**

*8000 PLUS* **VALUE VERDICT 3/5**




The animals are quite well drawn although for some reason they all seem to be creatures from exotic parts – they have lions and tigers but no cows or sheep for instance. Between the general files and the sheet of useful symbols there is a plethora of images that you might conceivably use at some time although you might go the rest of your life without once finding a suitable spot for the drawing of Bertie Bassett, the Liquorice Allsorts man.

Generally the drawings are of a high standard but sadly some seem to bit too small to be really useful. Perhaps instead of cramming everything on to one side of the disc they could have spread out a bit and digitised the pictures at a size that would allow a real chance to expand or contract the picture to suit.

## ELECTRIC STUDIO SNIP ART (6 discs)

**£7.45 each ● Electric Studio (0462 675666)**
**● Newsdesk International**

Longest established in the PCW graphics scene Electric Studio have the widest variety of clip art available for their Newsdesk International DTP package. Despite the fact the Electric Studio have lost some interest in the PCW market they still provide probably the widest variety of clip art discs – six in total – covering a wide range of topics.

As well as two quite varied general clip art discs (they call them snip art to be different) they have discs covering sports, leisure, travel and nature (animals, plants etc). These are mainly cartoon type drawings with a few quite good quality line drawings and some of the animal pictures are digitised photographs.

The discs are packed with images of various sizes, each stored separately although there is an index sheet where you can call up a small version of each picture to make your choice.

One problem with Newsdesk International has been its lack of compatibility with other graphics programs but anyone with Newsdesk International and £40 to invest should have few problems finding a suitable illustration – especially as you get the full Electric Studio graphics package as part of Newsdesk International and can therefore modify or improve the snip art to your heart's content. Although you might not find a use for every picture, with the variety of choice you should find something to suit.■

## Aids to Desktop Publishing on the PCW range from an Independant source.

The current range includes the following.

**COMPLEMENT** 8 disc of Fonts and Borders, available for all four DTP programs. The material includes Art Deco, Art Nouveau and Gothic borders, along with other styles. The fonts include the one for bulk text as well as three complementary Art Deco styles and two different Art Nouveau Fonts. Also included on the disc is a Locoscript File of Hints and Tips on Desktop Publishing.

For Newsdesk International users only, this is a disc of templates with text areas already laid out in the page. Various paper sizes are supported as well as disc labels, personal organiser pages and more.

**OUTLINE.** Also only for Newsdesk users, this disc has Borders already positioned on the page, saving time and effort on page layout. Less than 40% of the borders are from the selection on Complement, the rest are new designs including those bordering this advertisement.

**BORDERED.** 8 disc of Fine Lines and Little ensprint from line drawings by Michael Kay. There is not a cartoon amongst these beautiful pictures. For Stop Press, Newsdesk and Desktop Publisher. (Trust Street by request. £5 per disc extra.)

**ANIMAL 1.** Not a text, but a transparent aid to assist in page layout. For Newsdesk, Amstrad 2000, and Stop Press 1 inches and one 1 with full instructions.)

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Dragonfly Designs, 58, The Shrublands, HORSFORD, NR 10 3 EL.

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COMPETITION!

# WIN YOURSELF TIME

Twenty game packs of Time and Magik to be won in our mind stretching quiz

What better to while away those sunny summer afternoons than a good adventure game on the PCW? Well, we can think of a few things too, but when the *usual* English summer weather comes and it starts raining, the twenty lucky winners of our competition will have a copy of Mandarin Software's three-adventure set 'Time and Magik' to work through, and no chance of rain stopping play either. And to continue the subject of time, the first prize winner also gets a modern style clock which will give you endless hours of amusement trying to work out what time it is.

8000 Plus's games reviewer gave Time and Magik five out of five for atmosphere, challenge and value for money, so you know you're getting good stuff.

All you have to do to enter is look at the following questions on the subjects of time and magic and use your skill and judgement to decide the best answer for each. Then write down the answers on a postcard or on the back of a sealed envelope – for example, if you think the answer to question 1 is A, write '1-A' and so on. Add your name and address and send the result to: *Time and Magik, 8000 Plus, 4 Queen St, Bath, BA1 1EJ.*

The first entry picked out of the editorial toupée on Friday, 2nd September, wins the clock and a Time and Magik, and the nineteen runners-up will also receive a copy of the game.

## TIME

**1. What did James Ussher do in the 1650s?**

a) He started the tradition of the bride's and groom's guests sitting on opposite sides at a wedding
b) He calculated the moment of Creation in 4004 BC to the exact date and time in the afternoon
c) He started a brewery in Trowbridge, Wiltshire

**2. On the subject of time, which of the following most accurately represents the philosophy of the French opponent of Cartesian dualism, Henri Bergson?**

a) The flow of time can only be grasped by nonrational intuition
b) At the end of the day it's a game of ninety minutes, Brian
c) che sara sara, that's my philosophy

**3. What was Pope Gregory XIII's calendar of 1582?**

a) A new system of reckoning dates and leap years
b) A Christmas present sent round by the Vatican
c) Full of sexist Michaelangelo sketches

## MAGIC

**1. What is Enochian?**

a) An artificial intelligence programming language
b) Of or pertaining to an Ulster Unionist MP
c) Language used by the angels to speak to Sir John Dee

**2. In alchemy, what was the 'red dragon'?**

a) Sulphur
b) The pub where the Rosicrucians used to have meetings
c) The steam engine which took the Cardiff Magic Circle on their annual outing

**3. Which of the following was *not* a member of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn?**

a) Aleister Crowley
b) Arthur Waite
c) Tommy Cooper

# IS THIS VITAL

Alec Rae looks at programs to handle all that money you haven't got...

**People love packages for their PCWs. Many users are quite prepared to pay for something that will gently steer them through an intricate operation even although they know they could do the same thing themselves in BASIC or with a spreadsheet.**

**Vital Software obviously had this in mind when they launched their three packages each dealing with a different aspect of personal finances. Buy all three and you will have the opportunity to get your finances, savings and insurance totally and utterly organised.**

It is questionable how many PCW owners there are for whom these programs are vital. They would really suit people who are earning several times the salary of, say, the average 8000 Plus writer. You need a fair amount of activity in your personal finances to justify the investment in these packages. However most 8000 Plus readers are so rich they will probably regard the £29.90 investment in each package as negligible.

The other more significant investment that the Vital packages need is an investment in time. If you want to keep a tight track of your income and expenditure (as in Vital Income Processor) you will have to discipline yourself to regularly commit time to keeping the records up to date.

The others don't need so much time to keep up to date but you will need a considerable amount of time setting them up. For instance a full inventory of your possessions with valuations needed for the insurance processor could literally take days.

Although each program is a separate entity dealing with a different area of home finances, they all neatly fit together to produce a comprehensive picture of your financial status.

And yet all three packages can leave the user with a vague feeling of dissatisfaction – and not just because you suddenly realise how little money you have. The thinking behind them is good and the initial presentation is great. It just seems that the theory hasn't fully been put into practice.

The aim of any package like this is to make life easy and admittedly this has been attempted. These are virtually the only discs you can get with all the files you need on one disc. CP/M utilities like PAPER.COM, PIP.COM and SUBMIT.COM are there and they even have the .EMS start up file and a PROFILE.SUB to allow you to use them as 'boot' discs right away.

As you use the programs they prompt you for information in a logical order, lay it out in an orderly way and use split screen displays to make life easy.

## Time for PE

So what's wrong? It simply doesn't do enough to make life easy. The questions it asks often leave you wondering precisely what information it wants. For instance you might know that when the prompt in the Savings Package says 'P:E Ratio?' that it is wanting the price/earnings ratio for your shares. You might even know what the price/earnings ratio is but it would be difficult to find that out from the on screen prompts or the manual.

This wouldn't be a major problem if the programs were backed up with a really good manual. Unfortunately the manuals do not live up to the promise of their presentation.

It is not simply that they are too small. A handy pocket size could be an advantage and the print is almost readable. Sadly they seem to fail more through trying too hard. A lot of effort has gone into trying to explain the theory behind each program to allow the user to fully grasp what they are trying to achieve. Unfortunately this means long swathes of text that you will only want to read once (at the most) and therefore the actual practical details of running the program are spread over a wide area in the book.

There are 'detailed instructions' sections but these cover the precise key-presses needed rather than what sort of answer you should give to a specific prompt. A simple index and a more ordered approach would definitely have paid dividends.

This probably won't prove too much of a problem if you are using the software regularly but as, say, the Insurance program may only be updated once a year you might have a frustrating time leafing through the manual trying to discover the one part of the procedure you have forgotten.

In the same vein, the manual works quite hard to explain all the computer jargon and then quite happily accepts financial jargon without even a word of explanation. ■

**Marks for presentation**

Each package comes in an impressive looking presentation case with a dinky little manual (the size of a three inch disc) and beautifully printed spare disc labels – a standard of presentation rarely seen in the often haphazard world of PCW software.

## VITAL INCOME PROCESSOR

**£29.90 ● Vital Software (0732 810330) ● All PCWs**

Vital Income Processor (hereinafter called VIP) is the one program with any real opposition. The program aims to keep an accurate track of your money. Once set up, you simply type in all your income and outpourings at regular intervals. It stores all the standing orders and their freqency, allowing you to slot these into the correct account automatically.

The result is an accurate check of all your financial dealings on disc and a logical way to check up if a bill has been paid or when a cheque was paid into an account.

As such, it is probably the most flexible of the programs of this type although not the easiest to use. It tries hard to exploit its advantages over its main rival (the

## VITAL SAVINGS PROCESSOR

**£29.90 ● Vital Software (0732 810330)**
**● All PCWs**

First of all you need to have a lot of money before this program becomes worth while. The average savings of, say, a computer journalist (£5 in the Post Office and three Premium Bonds) would not justify buying this program.

However for someone with a reasonable portfolio of stocks and shares this might well prove a sensible way of keeping on top of them. The supposed reason for the program is to tell you your 'net worth' – a concept a little like a company's balance sheet; what you own minus what you owe. This means getting valuations of your house and chattels amongst many other details – so you have to be keen.

If you lie in bed at night worrying what your 'net worth' is you should rush and buy it right away. Otherwise the most obvious use of the program is to record the value of your investments. You can list all your shares and easily update the prices, automatically generating a total.

One problem appearing in all the programs but more obvious in VSP is the way it asks questions. All information is elicited by question and answer and the program tries hard to make sure that it is asking suitable questions. However there are times when you are not totally sure that the question you are being asked is applicable (not helped by the fact that many questions have 'if applicable' after them). A slight bug in the program meant that if you left a blank entry you could cause the program to crash – although no data was lost. Vital have said they will warn users of how to get round this and will sort the problem out in future versions.

**Verdict**
Handy for keeping track of share portfolios although whether you take the notion of 'net worth' seriously is up to you.

| PLUSES | MINUSES |
|---|---|
| ▲ Fast way of keeping track of share values | ▼ Questions occasionally vague |
| ▲ Can import details from the insurance processor | ▼ Enthusiasm needed to realise your 'net worth' |
| | ▼ Knowing your 'net worth' may not help |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **RANGE OF FEATURES** | **2/5** | **EASE OF USE** | **3/5** |
| **PERFORMANCE** | **4/5** | **DOCUMENTATION** | **2/5** |

***8000 PLUS* VALUE VERDICT 4/5**

## VITAL INSURANCE PROCESSOR

**£29.90 ● Vital Software (0732 810330)**
**● All PCWs**

The first thought that you might get of an insurance processor is that it keeps track of your insurance policies. True enough, the program does this but it also does the far more important task of making you take an inventory of all your possessions and putting a value on them.

This is the sort of thing probably everyone feels they should do but can't work up the enthusiasm. Even with the program this would be a lengthy job and one that you wouldn't take on lightly.

Again you have the ability to divide your possessions into various categories. This is the normal sort of headings (buildings, contents, vehicles etc) but it also allows you to allocate each possession to a category (you choose them yourself: things like furniture, pictures, books etc), locations (which room each object is situated in) and of course a value.

### One room at a time....

This allows you to make a systematic list of everything in your house a room at a time – sensible when you think of the amount of time it is liable to take. But if you have a special insurance policy to cover a specific type of possession or if you don't choose to insure some things, you can easily extract or exclude the correct category and still have a full inventory of your possessions.

There is a section on your properties with a chance to list valuations, type of construction and all those little details you could forget once it's burnt to the ground.

Once this section has been completed you press the button and out comes a final figure of the insurance cover you need. Of course a quick check with the Vital Income Processor shows you can't afford that amount of cover.

The last section covers the policies themselves – including details like exclusions on policies. Always check here before going sky-diving.

**Verdict**
A very sensible sort of thing to do but it does need an awful lot of enthusiasm.

| PLUSES | MINUSES |
|---|---|
| ▲ A simple and systematic way of finding out what your property is worth | ▼ Very time consuming |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **RANGE OF FEATURES** | **4/5** | **EASE OF USE** | **3/5** |
| **PERFORMANCE** | **4/5** | **DOCUMENTATION** | **2/5** |

***8000 PLUS* VALUE VERDICT 4/5**

trusty spreadsheet) by taking virtually every piece of information by a prompt. You set up various accounts (current, savings, credit cards), Expenditure and Income groups (so that you can divide your finances up under specific headings) and Time Horizons (periods of time that you choose). The system is quite comprehensive but not a totally intuitive method of working.

It does produce a wealth of information (either on paper or on screen) and breaks up the detail into virtually every form imaginable but it takes a while to discover a) how to do it properly and b) what practical use all this detail serves.

One area where it does try to outdo some rivals is in providing a form of budgeting. You set up a budget file which you can call up at any time to compare with actual spending. This is obviously a plus, giving a real purpose to the rather tedious task of keeping track of the pennies. It also allows you to keep track of spending on a specific project – say decorating or building an extension.

If you are rich enough to feel justified in buying the Vital Savings Processor you can also enter details into that program direct from files in this program.

**Verdict**
Not the easiest program of its type to use but it is thorough and ties in well with the other programs in the suite.

| PLUSES | MINUSES |
|---|---|
| ▲ Allows budgeting | ▼ Not an obvious method of operation |
| ▲ All information entered by screen prompts | ▼ Difficult to get information from the manual |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **RANGE OF FEATURES** | **4/5** | **EASE OF USE** | **2/5** |
| **PERFORMANCE** | **3/5** | **DOCUMENTATION** | **1/5** |

***8000 PLUS* VALUE VERDICT 3/5**

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# STOCK ANSWER

## Alec Rae continues his series using a spreadsheet like Cracker Turbo for business

**Virtually every business has stocks of materials or products, and there are plenty of programs to look after your stock. But what if your levels of stock don't justify this expense? One of the easiest ways to come unstuck in business is to lose track of your stock levels. Too little and you lose customers, too much and you have a large amount of money tied up doing nothing.**

Start by making up a matrix, a set-up with all the formula written in waiting for the information to be added. Start with a text column (`IC20[RETURN]TL` – or, as we say in English, "Insert a column 20 characters wide in text format justified to the left"). Then add the number of lines you want (`I25L`). This will hold the description of your products to head it up `PRODUCTS` or something really suitable like that.

Add one column integer format. This is for the number of products you have so if you deal in, say, half a million loose three inch nails at a time make this column wide enough to take seven digits.

### The price is right

Next you want a couple of columns in financial format (`I2C6[RETURN]OF`) to take the buying price and the selling price of your products. Obviously the difference between these two figures will be of vital interest to your future. If you don't get the right percentage markup you will not stay in business long.

The simplest way of tackling things would be to apply a simple formula to work out the selling price. Say you want 100 per cent gross profit; you'd just put a formula multiplying the cost price by two in the selling price column.

In practice this never works. Every business has its price anomalies. You can't keep the price of gerbil collars to the proper level because someone down the road is offering it at 10 pence less, or perhaps you hold the monopoly on llama bells and can bump the price up to a real profiteering level.

However it is still important that you keep track of what profit you are making on each item and this is best expressed in a percentage profit figure of the buying price.

So if you happen to have your buying price in column C and the selling price in column D put an integer column E and enter the formula (`(D5-C5)/C5*100`) in cell E5. This takes the difference between the buying and selling price and expresses it as a percentage of the buying price. Copy this formula down the column for as many entries as you think you might have (`CS12[RETURN]D[RETURN]`).

Switch off the Automatic Calculation (`A`[RETURN]) and then fill in your buying and selling prices. When you switch the Automatic Calculation back off again (or force a recalculation by typing `!` [RETURN]) the program will work out the markup for each produce.

### On average it's easy

Useful as this may be it won't really give you the overall picture. Perhaps more useful would be the average percentage markup of all the products. This is easier done than said. Just find a suitable cell and type in (`AVERAGE(E5...E12)`) or whatever the suitable references are and you will get an average figure in that column.

Another useful couple of details are the largest and the smallest markup – again a simple exercise. In nearby cells type in `MAXIMUM(E5...E12)` and `MINIMUM(E5...E12)` and you will automatically be shown the maximum and the minimum profit margins.

Remember however that even these figures could be misleading. For instance if you have a wide variety in the value of your products or a variety in the volume of sales you could still come unstuck. If your markup on a high volume product is low you could appear to have a high average profit margin and still lose out.

Therefore a useful figure would be the percentage

A2 'Stock
T1 ABCDEFGIJLMNOPORSTUVWXZ!+-\/).('* arrows
Next:

| | A | B | C | D | E | F | G |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | No in Stock | Goods | Unit cost | Unit price | % Markup | Discounted Price | Stock Value Purchase | Stock Value Sales |
| 2 | | | | | | | | |
| 3 | | | | | | | | |
| 4 | 1030 | Small Round Things | 1.25 | 1.95 | 56 | 1.66 | 1,287.50 | 2,008.50 |
| 5 | 456 | Big Shiny Things | 100.00 | 150.00 | 50 | 127.50 | 45,600.00 | 68,400.00 |
| 6 | 650 | Small Square Things | 2.45 | 3.50 | 43 | 2.98 | 1,592.50 | 2,275.00 |
| 7 | 23 | Things (Medium Size) | 45.00 | 59.95 | 33 | 50.96 | 1,035.00 | 1,378.85 |
| 8 | 100 | Small Thing Holder | 76.50 | 110.00 | 44 | 93.50 | 7,650.00 | 11,000.00 |
| 9 | 234 | Things (Dark Blue) | 32.00 | 39.99 | 25 | 33.99 | 7,488.00 | 9,357.66 |
| 10 | 5 | Things (Deluxe) | 123.60 | 199.00 | 61 | 169.15 | 618.00 | 995.00 |
| 11 | 23 | Expensive Things | 68.34 | 99.99 | 51 | 84.99 | 1,525.82 | 2,299.77 |
| 12 | | | | | | | 68,796.82 | 97,714.78 |
| 13 | | | | | | | | |
| 14 | | | | | | Discounted Stock Value | | 83,057.56 |
| 15 | | | | | | Purchase Stock Minus VAT | | 58,084.19 |
| 16 | | | | Ave Markup | 45 | | | |
| 17 | | | | Max Markup | 61 | | | |
| 18 | | | | Min Markup | 25 | | | |
| 19 | | | | | | | | |
| 20 | | | | | | | | |
| 21 | | | | | | | | |
| 22 | | | | | | | | |
| 23 | | | | | | | | |
| 24 | | | | | | | | |
| 25 | | | | | | | | |

The simple way to keep track of your stocks and your profit margins. The weekly stock sheet.

### Any sheet you like

This example has been worked out using the new Cracker Turbo spreadsheet from NewStar although most good quality spreadsheets have similar facilities and can carry out the same functions, although perhaps using different commands.

# A little bit off

**Depending on what kind of business you have, you may want to give discount on various products for bulk sales or prompt payment. Again this is sheer simplicity using your spreadsheet stock control system.**

**Just add in a column after the prices (in our example it's column F) and write in the formulae to reduce it by the correct amount. For example we have just allowed a straight 15% across the board (`15%D4`) but you can vary this in any way you want.**

**It is also reasonable to apply this to your selling price total so that if you suddenly find all your customers paying up in time you can still be sure of a reasonable markup.**

**Using this system you can, of course, make up a really complicated discount system with different levels of discounts being given for the most spurious of reasons. The advantage is that by simply cutting the columns you don't want (the stock levels and buying prices for instance) with `(Z)ap(C)olumn` you can easily produce a simple price list which you can print out and post off to all your customers.**

**Changing this, as prices change, is the work of a moment while allowing you at the same time to keep track of your markups.**

## Let's get series

This article is part of a series on how to get the best from your spreadsheet. By using utilities explained in the previous three months you would be able to modify and improve your spreadsheet accounts set-up.

markup of the total stock value at the buying price as compared to the total stock value at the sale price. You will obviously want these figures anyway for your own accounting needs and to show you how much money you have tied up in stock.

## Just add the stock

Again this is easy. Set up a couple of columns in financial format (`I2C[RETURN]OF[RETURN]`) and in the first one enter the formula `A5*C5` – or to put it more obviously take the figure from the first column (the number of that product) and multiply it by the figure in the third column (the buying price) to get the value you paid for the stocks in hand. Do the same with the selling price (`A5*D5`) and then total both columns (`SUM(G5...G12)` and `SUM(H5...H12)`) and you have the total value of stocks no matter which way you want to compute it (what you paid for it or what you expect to get if you sell it).

Then to complete your list of useful figures on profit margins find another cell and, if you are following our example exactly, enter the formula (`H11-G11)/G11*100`) – expressing the difference between the buying and selling totals as a percentage of the buying price. Armed with this array of figures you can really start making sensible decisions about whether your profit margins are at an adequate level.

## This week, next week

In this world of constant change people like to keep in touch with the past. Or put it another way this stock sheet is valuable but if you can compare it with other stock sheets you will learn a great deal more about your business.

One simple addition will allow you to work out how quickly each product sells. Once you have filled in the sheet for a month and saved it, you can use it as the basis for an interesting comparison sheet next month.

Move to the first column and add three columns, integer (whole number) format (`I3C5[RETURN]I[RETURN]`). Then copy everything from the original first column into the second column (`(C)opy(C)olumn[RETURN]`). You then have two columns side by side with the same figures. Go to the first column and blank out all the figures with `(B)lank(C)olumn[RETURN]`.

Then you can add in all the new figures for the month in the blank column and all the figures for the month will be produced automatically. Head up the third column ORDERS IN as this will take details of any orders you have received in the month. Say you received an order for 100 llama bells enter it in this column in the correct line.

The fourth column can be headed SALES. To work this out enter the formula `B4*C4-A4` and copy it all the way down the column. This adds last month's stock level to any new orders and subtracts the present stock level and, hey presto, you have the number of items you should have sold last month. This could be tied in with the sale price to give you a cross reference on how much cash you should have taken in the month.

This ability to compare one month's stock figures against the next is vital to any business and gives you the chance to spot easily if things are going wrong – stock levels rising too high or even more seriously stock disappearing without money appearing in the till. ■

# The VATman cometh

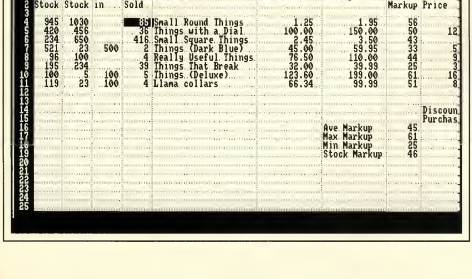
**Since the government decided to turn every business into unpaid tax collectors by discovering VAT, everyone has been desperately looking for ways of making this unpaid, thankless task easier.**

**This spreadsheet is an obvious example. If you want to work out your profit margins without taking VAT into account you can simply add VAT at the end. For example `B12+15%B12` in our example will give you the stock value plus 15% VAT. You can add 15% to each of the prices just as easily for a +VAT price.**

**But it is as easy to remove the VAT already paid on the purchase price, which you will be reclaiming. This time you need the command NPV, which stands interestingly enough for 'Net Present Value'. What it really means is if you enter the formula `NPV(15,B15)` the program will remove the 15% already added.**

## Blessed profit

Profit generally means a percentage of the selling price, markup a percentage of the buying price – for example, if you buy for £5 and sell for £10, it's 50% profit and 100% markup.



```
R4    ((B4+C4)-A4)                                                    K25
I     ABCDEFGIJLMNOPORSTUVWXZ!+-\/).('* arrows                        14012
Next:                                                                 Auto
     A        B        C        D        E        F        G        H
1   1/3      1/4     Order    No.    Goods          Unit cost  Unit price    Z     Discoun
2  Stock    Stock in    Sold                                              Markup  Price
3
4    945     1030              38  Small Round Things          1.25        1.95     56
5    420      456              36  Things with a Dial        100.00      150.00     50       12
6    234      650             416  Small Square Things         2.45        3.50     43
7    521       23     500        2  Things (Dark Blue)         45.00       59.95     33        5
8     96      100              4  Really Useful Things       76.50      110.00     44        3
9    195      234              39  Things That Break         32.00       39.99     25        3
10   100        5     100        5  Things (Deluxe)          123.60      189.00     61       16
11   119       23     100        6  Llama collars             66.34       99.99     51        8
12
13
14                                                                                 Discount
15                                                                                 Purchas
16                                                                  Ave Markup        45
17                                                                  Max Markup        61
18                                                                  Min Markup        25
19                                                                  Stock Markup      46
20
21
22
23
24
25
```

## Ringing the changes

Just because you have used your spreadsheet for one purpose doesn't mean that you can't adapt them for other purposes.

Here last week's stock sheet is used to give a comparison with this week's stock levels to show how much of each item you have sold.

You can even put in a BLEEP command with a simple IF statement to show if stock levels fall below a set level.

Or Z(ap) the columns you don't need and make an up-to-date price list.

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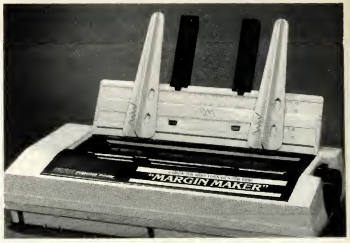


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# ANOTHER USEFUL REVIEW

We were delighted to score an exclusive scoop by being the first magazine to review Grottysoft's long-promised SPUNG! SPUNG is an integrated development environment with built-in calculator, style checker, pop-up PacMan game, Serbo-Croat spreadsheet and IQ test. And once again, Grottysoft have a runaway winner on their hands!

Owing to production holdups, our demonstration PCW version of SPUNG was supplied on 24 disks for an IBM PC running in Amstrad simulation mode. Three special ROM packs and a co-processor borrowed from a BBC Master completed the easy-to-understand set-up, which will of course be even simpler when the final PCW program is available. For instance, SPUNG will be crammed on to a mere 15 PCW disks, losing only minor facilities such as the ability to process text files exceeding 150 words.

It only takes a few hours to install SPUNG for your computer. The simple, on-screen, interactive installation program is a model of clarity: we knew we were in good hands as SPUNGINSTAL went straight to the important points by asking WAHT SORT OF COMUPTER IS THS?, DOES IT HAV DISK DRIVE(s)? and ARE YOU USIG MONITOR? By the way, its necessary to run the SET24X80 program, load the SPUNGKEY.WP keyboard file and temporarily disconnect the printer cable before SPUNG will run... we're sure these points will be mentioned in the production version of the manual, along with the need for a special power supply.

## Amazing innovations

It soon becomes obvious that SPUNG is a rich, powerful piece of fifth-generation software which can only grow in usefulness and indispensability with months or years of experience. The 25 minutes we were allowed with it (Grottysoft's Securicor man was on a tight schedule) did not perhaps exhaust the full range of its possibilities, but what we saw impressed us thoroughly. Pop-up, pull-down, multi-windowed, Y-front menus make the simplest functions available in as few as fifteen keystrokes – and there are short cuts too. The designers are not afraid to make imaginative use of the keyboard: the space bar, for example, has become an automatic "toggle key" which moves you in mere seconds between the accountancy, graphics and desktop horoscope functions, and after a minute or two we found it much easier to enter spaces the SPUNG way, by holding down ALT, EXTRA and f3.

Error messages are signalled dramatically by reprogramming the "beep" to sound like a large gong and flashing the entire screen on and off five times a second until you acknowledge your mistake (by pressing the POWER button, of course – everything else is deactivated. We've never met a quicker way of teaching users not to make mistakes, especially since reloading SPUNG means fourteen disk changes).

That this is high-powered, fast-lane software is confirmed by the fact that it comes all ready set up to print out on Grottysoft's own-model laser printer, giving fabulous text quality for only £2200 extra. What's more, a Printer Configurator program is promised for next year, which will allow SPUNG's sensational graphics to be simulated on your old PCW printer too.

By the way, you'll need a memory upgrade, a hard disk, an add-on serial port, a mouse and a bar-code reader if you really want to make the most of the mind-boggling facilities of SPUNG.

## All this and more

The documentation is particularly impressive, more than 1000 pages of detailed and clearly-written information which should be translated from the Korean in no time. (Speaking of which, we're told that retail copies will offer a selection of spelling checkers besides the Rastafarian one supplied to us.) Despite all the challenges we threw at it, SPUNG always did very nearly exactly what we thought the manual said it should, and hardly crashed at all.

One warning for all you potential users: under certain rare circumstances, such as your pressing f5, PASTE, EXIT or RETURN, it is possible for the extra overhead of SPUNG's disk accesses to set fire to the floppy drive. We pointed this out to Grottysoft, and with their usual helpfulness they replied at once that nobody else had reported such a problem, that they would nevertheless write to their American parent company for advice, and that they could supply cheap $CO_2$ fire extinguishers as an added customer service. Our one small cavil has thus been effectively dealt with before the program's official release.

With such raw programming power and such in-depth support, it's remarkable that Grottysoft have been able to keep the price down to an attractive £199, exclusive of VAT, postage, packing and the special add-on software needed for SPUNG to accept text in lower case. No better bargain exists in the PCW market today, as the full-colour, multi-page ads in the next fourteen issues of this very magazine will testify!

*(Although the tone of 8000 Plus tends to be a mite more cynical than the above... if you think that reviews reminiscent of this one never ever appear in any computer magazine, I can only admire the purity of your thoughts.)* ■

LANGFORD

Wasted

A page in the company of author and PCW pundit David Langford

## More on silly words

**My favourite source of horrible acronyms and neologisms is the trade newspaper *Computing*, which makes the whole thing twice as confusing with a house style whereby abbreviations are disguised as real words in lower case. The last word of the previous sentence, had it appeared just like that in *Computing*, would probably have meant Computer Aided Software Engineering – no, I'm not making this up. Similarly, "eft" has little to do with newts (I think it's electronic financial transfer); "pcs" are computers; and "risc", which you've probably met, is not a typo. I'm still waiting for them to refer to a dynamic RAM chip as a wee dram.**

BASIC TUTORIAL 7

# FILL HER UP SAM

## More on how to write your own databases in JETSAM

**Last month this section left its readers tantalisingly poised, their JETSAM files created and still no way to put information into them. As there is something less than useful about this situation let us rush to open them again and prepare to put in all that valuable data.**

If you faithfully followed last month's instructions you could have two files called something like BRTHDAY.DAT and BRTHDAY.IND on a disc. As soon as we created them we immediately closed them.

But to put any information in or get any out we have to open them again, so we have to write a routine that opens them every time we run the program.

This is achieved with the rather predictable command `OPEN "K" #1,"BRTHDAY.DAT", BRTHDAY.IND",2,91`. The "K" stands for Keyed File and the 1 is the file number, like the file number you would use in a normal sequential file. After the file names comes the mystical 'Locking Number' (in this case 2) and the number 91 which represents the total record size. The record size is decided by adding the maximum number of characters required for each field with a couple extra bytes added for Jetsam to store its own information. This is the same number that you used to create the files.

In practical terms this means that the computer now knows that a new record will start every 91 bytes. But obviously it also needs to know where each field starts within this total record. So immediately after you enter the FIELD command dividing up the total record amongst the fields.

### I name this field....

You need to give each field a name. This is the name you will use when getting information back out of the file, so pick ones that will mean something to you. In this case we want fields for the name (20 characters), three lines of address (20 each), a date (8) and a simple yes/no field (1).

For this we would write `FIELD 1,20 AS name$,20 AS add1$,20 AS add2$,20 AS add3$,8 AS date$,1 AS card$`. Of course you can adjust the sizes of the field as you require but remember if you enter more than 20 characters in the name$ field, for instance, it will just cut the entry off at 20 characters.

Now you have to get information into the file. This is done sensibly enough with your old favourite command `INPUT`. You set up inputs for all the fields in turn but remember to use a different variable name from the name you used for the field. So, for instance, for the name$ field you could use `n$ – INPUT "Name :"; n$` and then `INPUT "Address :"; a1$` and so on.

The entries at these inputs can be any length so you might want to add in some check that you do not enter more than the maximum number of characters (`IF LEN(n$)>20 THEN PRINT "Too Long";`). Now you have to fit these into the fields set up with the field command.

This is achieved using LSET – literally 'Left Set'. If you have, say, 10 characters to set in the 20 character long name$ field you set them to the left ie the beginning of the field. The next 10 spaces will be left blank; the computer knows, thanks to the FIELD command, to look for the start of the next field after 20 spaces. So you would write `LSET name$=n$: LSET add1$=a1$` and so on until all the entries are entered in the fields.

### Is this a record?

You can actually put these pieces of information into the file with the command ADDREC (you guessed – Add Record). ADDREC has three numbers after it, the file number (1), the locking number (2) and the rank number (in this case 1). This last digit is a fancy feature that allows you to divide Jetsam files into eight different sections (0 to 7). This really comes into its own when you have a number of keyed files

**Jargon buster**

Imagine a name-and-address list. On this, the name plus details for one person would be called a *record*, a single slot for information such as name or one line of address or telephone number etc. would be a *field*, and the whole list would be called a database or *data file*.

```
1000 MEMORY,,,256                                                    1
1010 BUFFERS 10
1020 OPEN "K",#1,"BRTHDAY.DAT","BRTHDAY.IND",2,91
1030 FIELD 1,20 AS name$,20 AS add1$,20 AS add2$,20 AS
add3$,8 AS dat$,1 AS card$
1040 INPUT "Do you want to add a record";y$
1050 IF UPPER$(LEFT$(y$,1))<>"Y" THEN 1200
1060 INPUT "What name :";n$
1070 IF LEN(n$)>20 THEN PRINT "Too long":GOTO 1060
1080 INPUT "Address";a1$
1090 IF LEN(a1$)>20 THEN PRINT "Too long":GOTO 1080
```

```
1120 LSET name$=n$:LSET add1$=a1$:LSET add2$=a2$                     2
1130 LSET add3$=a3$:LSET dat$=d$:LSET card$=c$
1140 PRINT:PRINT "Entry is being added"
1150 result = ADDREC(1,2,1,name$)
1160 IF result <>0 THEN PRINT "Got a problem.Try again."
GOTO 1150
1170 result = CONSOLIDATE(1)
1180 INPUT "Do you want to add another name";y$
1190 IF UPPER$(LEFT$(y$,1))="Y" THEN 1060
```

(files that you can call up information on) and so it is sufficient here to stick a bland 1.

After that there is a field name, in this case name$. This is the keyed field in this example. This is the piece of information that goes into your index file (here BRTHDAY.IND) and the entries are then sorted into alphabetical order. In this file is the information needed for the computer to find all the rest of the details in the other file (BRTHDAY.DAT).

One useful check that everything goes off all right is that every time you use commands like ADDREC it generates a number. If everything has gone OK the number is 0. Any mistake or problem and the program will throw up an error number which will help you track down the problem. Some of these error numbers are given in the BASIC manual, although not all.

To allow you to keep track of these you can write something like `result=ADDREC(1,2,1,name$)`. Then if you are worried that there are problems just add in a line saying `PRINT result` and you can see if things are going wrong.

The final command that you need to take into account here is 'consolidate'. As explained last week there are buffers that hold the information before it is physically put on to the disc. However if you put in the command CONSOLIDATE (1) this forces the program to put the information on to the disc. In effect it is like closing and re-opening the file. You might want to stick this in every so often just to avoid the worst risks of inconsistent files.

## File and Seek

Once you have seen how to go about adding records you have a reasonable idea of how to perform other important tasks. Finding a file again using SEEKKEY is very similar. Put in an INPUT asking for the name of the record you are wanting (ie the entry that is in your keyed field) and give it a variable name like seek$.

Then using the command `SEEKKEY(1,2,1,seek$)` and the reasonably unambiguous command GET 1, you will be able to find the correct record. Print out the elements you want using `PRINT name$` or `PRINT add1$`. Again you can find out the error number if things go wrong.

One little problem with this is that you need to enter the entry exactly as you entered it the first time. But don't panic. If there is nothing at all like it in the records Jetsam will throw up error number 103 but if it's got something quite close it will produce 105 and give you the details for the nearest record. To give greater security people will often use the command UPPER$ to change all entries in upper case (`name$=UPPER$(name$)`) so you don't have to worry about differences in lower or upper case letters.

If this is not the one you want, add the command SEEKPREV or SEEKNEXT (something like `result=SEEKNEXT(1,2)`) which allows you to move through the records one at a time. SEEKRANK finds the first record in the file. A good example of using SEEKRANK and SEEKNEXT is to provide an index of all the records on file - see Box 4

As it is so easy to get entries into a Jetsam file you will be pleased to hear you can also get rid of them again just as quickly. This is achieved with DELKEY. You can use this in two ways – the normal method of using DELKEY(1,2,1,delete$) or you can use it along with SEEKKEY to find the record first.

Apart from this the only other obvious advice is tc be very careful to always close your files before leave (CLOSE 1) or you could get inconsistent files.

## All I want is nothing

**Using commands in Jetsam often gives you an error number. What you normally want is '0' which translated means "Everything has gone fine". Other ones worth knowing are**
**103 – Can't find a record anything like that**
**105 – Can't find an exact match but this one is quite close**
**113 – This is not a keyed file (ie. not a Jetsam file)**
**114 – Record is not locked (trying to Get or Put a record which is not properly locked.)**
**115 – The dreaded inconsistent files**

1) An example of how to OPEN your Keyed files and set the fields. Enter the information using a different variable name from the field names
2) To get the data into the record you have to set it to the left(LSET). ADDREC adds the data into the buffer and CONSOLIDATE actually forces Jetsam to put it onto the disc.
3) How to get the information out of the file. SEEKKEY looks for an entry on the index file with the same data as is in the variable seek$. If result=0 everything is OK. If result=105 Jetsam has given you the nearest match so you might want to go to a routine that will allow you to browse through the records using SEEKNEXT and SEEKPREV.
4) This routine allows you to print out an index of all the records in the name$ field on your index file. SEEKRANK finds the first record and SEEKNEXT just keeps printing them out until it can't find any more (result=103). ■

**3**

```
1200 INPUT "Do you want to find a record";y$
1210 IF UPPER$(LEFT$(y$,1))<>"Y" THEN 1500
1220 INPUT "What name";seek$
1230 result=SEEKKEY(1,2,1,seek$)
1240 IF result=103 THEN PRINT "NOT FOUND":GOTO 1300
1250 GET 1
1260 PRINT add1$ :PRINT add2$ :PRINT add3$
1270 PRINT dat$: PRINT card$
1270 IF result=105 THEN INPUT "Is this the right record";
y$" :IF UPPER$(LEFT$(y$,1))="N" THEN 1500
```

**4**

```
1300 INPUT "Do you want a list of names";y$
1310 IF UPPER$(LEFT$(y$,1))<>"Y" GOTO 1200
1320 line$=SPACE$(80):s=0
1330 result=SEEKRANK(1,0,0)
1340 GET 1
1350 s=s+1
1360 IF s=1 THEN MID$(line$,3,20)=name$
1370 IF s=2 THEN MID$(line$,28,20)=name$
1380 IF s=3 THEN MID$(line$,53,20)=name$
1390 IF s=3 THEN PRINT line$ :line$=SPACE$(80) :s=0
1400 result=SEEKNEXT(1,2):IF result<102 THEN 1340
1410 PRINT line$:PRINT
```

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# SELLING STORIES

Magazines everywhere are full of short stories – and we've all looked at them sometime and thought 'I could do that.' But once you *have* done it, how do you sell them? Mark Bannerman tells you how

I decided, quite a long time ago, that the two most important aspects of producing saleable short fiction were writing to a formula and adopting a professional technique. My formula is simple. Place the central character in a situation, the nature of which you've made evident at the very start of the story. In other words, try and get the reader hooked right from the start. Resist all urges to extricate the hero or heroine from that situation before the final paragraph of the story whilst making the ending even more arresting than the beginning. If the reader goes away with a satisfied smile on his face, then you've achieved your aim.

## Weave your spell

Having set up a few standard templates, your PCW can hit the nail every time with perfectly laid out typescripts, accurate word-counts and faultless spelling. Always use a spell checker such as Prospell or LocoSpell. You could always set your name and address in eye-catching fonts, making sure of course to insert a new ribbon in your printer and you might well be giving your work a headstart by the time it reaches the editor's desk.

Find out the fiction editor's name from the front of the magazine and write to them personally, purely as a mark of courtesy if nothing else, when you submit your article. Mail your work in an envelope which only requires you to fold the typescript once and remember to enclose a stamped, addressed envelope for the return of your typescript should it prove unsuitable. Contrary to the pundits of gloom there is still a tremendous demand for short stories. You've only got to study the bookstalls to realise this – but most of the markets are in women's magazines. Not all the tales they publish are romantic, but a strong feminine interest is vital.

Stories favoured by different magazines vary immensely. For example, *Woman's Realm* goes for unusual stories which appeal to intelligent women in the 23-50 age bracket. *Loving* is aimed at working-class teenaged girls. The stories, always told in the first person, can be highly sensual without being pornographic. And the teenage language used must be just right. *Woman's Weekly* want tales that are strongly romantic, yet restrained and very moral. On the other hand, magazines like *Mayfair*, *Men Only*, *Fiesta* and *Knave* pay well for very explicit first-person stories featuring various sexual exploits.

## Reading the market

The more reading you do, the more successful as a writer you're likely to be. The best way to get a feel for the market is to study the various publications. Take a note of things like paragraph-length, dialogue lay-out, punctuation, style and so on. You will see that some publications use stories of 1000 words in length whilst others go up to 5000. Find out what type of readership various magazines encourage. Are story-endings usually happy or slightly off-beat? Is the sexual content explicit, gentle or non-existent? Are stories told in the first person or the third person narrative? You have to keep up to date. It's not enough just to study back-issues, because magazines are constantly evolving and changing.

Perhaps you've already got some idea of the type of story you want to write, but no doubt you will have some adjusting to do to tailor them to the requirements of a particular editor. It's very much a buyer's market.

One opening that you might feel like pursuing is "Morning Story" on BBC Radio 4. This uses about 250 stories a year. Many reflect life in contemporary Britain, and some of the themes can be harsh, even challenging as well as the more gentle type. These stories are approximately 2200 words long, and the present payment is £87 for the first acceptance. BBC's booklet *Writing for Radio* will help to put you on the right track. Another quite invaluable author's aid is *The Writers' and Artists' Year Book* (A & C Black). This lists most UK publications and their addresses. It also gives useful information on overseas markets, copyright, income tax, books for

writers, writing courses and so on.

Highly recommended is *The Magazine Writer's Handbook* by Gordon Wells (Allison & Busby). This provides in-depth details on opening for freelance writers and rates of payment, and takes a good deal of the hard work out of market research. Another book well worth acquiring is *How to Write Stories for Magazines* by Donna Baker (Allison & Busby). This contains good advice on writing and marketing techniques. In addition, many editors will provide guidelines on request.

## Time marches on

Publications often take from six to eight weeks to give a decision on work. It is better not to enquire too early. Every day editors are swamped out with unsolicited submissions, ninety per cent of which are quite unsuitable.

Being only human, and with such a mass to examine, editors are not going to strain their eyes to read something which is badly produced. It will simply be returned once time is found to place it in the envelope you enclosed with the typescript. Hence the importance of a pristine, professional-looking typescript.

When typescripts arrive at an editorial office, they are usually separated into 'authors – regular' and 'authors – casual'. Editors usually read the regulars first and extract all the promising manuscripts. Remaining slots are then usually filled from the casuals. Obviously it's a great advantage to become a regular – but how do you join that select group? Persistence helps. If you produce a stream of stories which you have tailored to the exact requirement of the magazine, sooner or later you'll get the break. You will probably be better off concentrating on a limited number of markets initially.

Once the fiction-editor has made a short-list of likely stories, these are forwarded, with appropriate recommendations, to the editor-in-chief for final approval. If this is given, authors are notified and a buy-list made out and sent to the accounts department. Most magazines pay for fiction on acceptance, but some pay after publication.

The typescripts themselves may undergo further editing and are then sent to the printer. Once printed, the material is returned to the editorial office for further proof-reading and illustration. The latter process can take at least three months. It may be many more months before the story is finally published. Frequently stories are filed away in categories so that editors can obtain a suitable 'mix' at a later date.

## Money, money, money

Rates of payment vary tremendously. Quality magazines like *Good Housekeeping*, *Woman and Home* and *Woman's Journal* (and 8000 Plus too!) usually pay from £70 upwards per thousand words. *Woman's World* pays about £60 per thousand words. *Woman*, *Woman's Realm*, *Woman's Weekly* and *Annabel* come within the £20-£40 per thousand word bracket.

Publications such as *Loving*, *True Romances*, *True Story* pay from £20 per thousand words; *Romance* and *My Story* £14. Magazines from the DC Thomson stable (*Secrets*, *People's Friend* etc) frequently pay even less, but promising beginners are encouraged. These magazines offer continuous markets, whereas to gain publication in an up-market glossy tends to be a one-off success although writing under different pen-names may help here. Of course, all the above rates are subject to negotiation.

There are a number of small-circulation literary magazines such as *Panurge*, *Ambit*, *Jennings*, *Orbis*, *London Magazine* etc who publish stories of various types but payment is generally pretty low.

Competitions are worth entering. These are numerous and there is usually a small entry fee. Some of them offer quite considerable cash prizes, for example, first prize in The Bridport Arts Centre Competition is £1000. The Freelance Creative Writing competition offers a prize of £500. The Swanage Arts Festival awards £100. The Guide to Literary Prizes, Grants and Awards gives a comprehensive list of all major writing competitions and is available from The National Book League, 45 East Hill, London SW18 2QZ.

## Rejected

As a freelance writer, you have to learn to bite the bullet. Rejections come thick and fast. Perhaps your stories are hopeless, but on the other hand perhaps an editor is overstocked or has already bought work on a similar theme, or maybe your presentation is poor.

A printed rejection slip offers little encouragement, but if the editor has taken the trouble to make some helpful comment on that slip, then at least you know your masterpiece has been looked at, and any advice will be worth taking.

Of course, you may receive quite an encouraging letter with your returned typescript, and this is the next best thing to an acceptance. It may suggest that the story needs adjustment and will then be reconsidered. If that's the case, carry out the necessary work and get the story back to the editor by return of post.

And remember, when one publication rejects your work, you can always try it elsewhere. The main thing is not to get discouraged. Most of us practically drown in rejection-slips, but there's the lurking conviction that we're in good company. Wasn't it George Bernard Shaw who said he'd received enough rejection-slips to paper the walls of his home? On the other hand, it was said that Roald Dahl has never had a single rejection. But I suspect that most of us will aspire to nothing better than the mere George Bernard Shaw category. Good luck!

*● Mark Bannerman is a freelance writer. He has appeared on TV and Radio and has had several hundred short stories published in the UK and abroad.*

## Rules and regs

Adopting a professional technique requires dedication, but it really does pay dividends – and, let's face it, owning a PCW does make life that little bit easier. However, there are certain fundamental rules.

The basic idea is to make things as easy for the person who'll be reading the story as possible. Print your story on white A4-size paper, not too big (ie. not double width, which is excruciating to read) and not too small (ie. not 15 or 17 pitch). PS, 10 or 12 pitch are fine. Double-space your lines and leave a margin of at least an inch on each side of the page. You needn't bother about justifying your right-hand margins; some editors find this harder to read than normal ragged right margins. Number the pages. At the top of the first one clearly show your name and address and, of course, the title of the story. On the last page, type END at the appropriate place (just in case the editor can't arrive at this conclusion by himself), and beneath this, type your name and address once again. LocoScript's headers and footers can do all this; if you don't know how, brush the dust off the manual!

Attach a cover-sheet to the front of your typescript on which is once more displayed your name and address (who says writers suffer from identity crises?) the story's title and the author's name which may be your own, or alternatively a pen-name. (It can be better, for example, to submit a story for a woman's magazine under a female pen-name.) Always state the word-length of your story.

At the foot of the cover-sheet, indicate the serial rights that you are offering, for example FIRST BRITISH SERIAL OFFERED for first-time publication in the UK. This ensures that your retain copyright on the story and you can offer elsewhere Second British Serial Rights, Overseas Rights, Film Rights and so on, should you so desire it.

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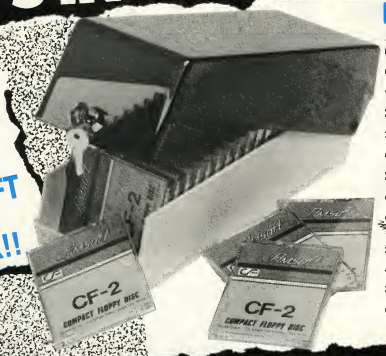


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# LISTINGS

Boxes, ellipses, squares — listings of all shapes and sizes...

## DESIGNER
by Eryl Rowlands

This is one program where it is easier to tell you to experiment than to actually explain how it works. The idea is that deep inside the screen character set are a number of very interesting graphics that are ideal for creating boxes on screen.

These are a series of lines, corners and joining units that if put in the correct order can create impressive forms and layouts on screen.

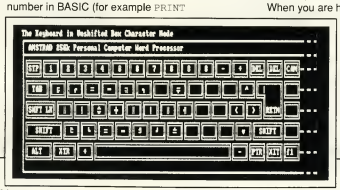
Unfortunately they are not available in the printer character set but of course 8000 series owners can print out them out in a slightly smaller form with the screen dump facility.

The trouble is that you cannot produce these on screen by a keystroke. Probably the simplest way is by using PRINT and the character string number in BASIC (for example `PRINT CHR$(138)`) but building up a complicated layout by this method is quite frightening.

With this program you can move about the screen and at a single key-stroke produce all the effects. Then by pressing the [f1] key you can switch to normal text mode and enter the text you require.

When you are happy with your layout press [SHIFT] and 'Q' and the program prints out on the printer a BASIC program that will recreate this layout.

It also saves it as an ASCII listing to disc under the filename DESIGNER.LST. This can




```
10 lines=0:incr=10:DIM line$(31),p$(31,91),t(31,91):esc$=CHR$(27):PRINT esc$;"0"          17B2
20 DEF FNat$(y,x)=esc$+"Y"+CHR$(32+y)+CHR$(32+x)                                         0E91
30 cls$=esc$+"E":esc$+"H":PRINT cls$;esc$;CHR$(65);:text=1                               12C7
40 WIDTH LPRINT 128:LPRINT esc$;CHR$(15):OPEN "O",1,"designer.lst"                       189E
50 in$=INKEY$:IF in$="" THEN GOTO 50                                                     0A90
60 IF in$=CHR$(26) THEN text=-text:GOTO 50                                               0F67
70 IF SGN(text)=-1 THEN GOTO 320                                                         0BA9
80 IF in$="Q" THEN p$(y,x)="Q":PRINT cls$:GOTO 350                                       112B
90 num=INSTR(")á<]@])qeEtaAdgGzcCbwrRysSfHhxVvnijkm #"+CHR$(13),in$)                     1D37
100 IF num=0 THEN PRINT CHR$(7);:GOTO 50                                                 0DC6
110 IF in$=CHR$(13) THEN p$(y,x)=CHR$(13):t(y,x)=13:x=0:y=y+1:GOTO 240                   1883
120 IF in$="#" OR in$=" " THEN GOTO 160                                                  0993
130 IF num<8 THEN GOTO 140 ELSE GOTO 270                                                 0D29
140 ON num GOTO 150,180,170,200,190,220,210                                              0B21
150 GOSUB 230                                                                            03EB
```

```
160 x=x+1:GOTO 240                                                                       0706
170 GOSUB 230                                                                            03F2
180 x=x-1:GOTO 240                                                                       070A
190 GOSUB 230                                                                            03F6
200 y=y+1:GOTO 240                                                                       0705
210 GOSUB 230                                                                            03E7
220 y=y-1:GOTO 240                                                                       0709
230  p$(y,x)="":t(y,x)=0:PRINT" ";:RETURN                                                0C57
240 IF x<0 THEN y=y-1:x=90                                                               09B6
250 IF x>90 THEN y=y+1:x=0                                                               094C
260 y=y-(y<0):y=y+(y>31):PRINT FNat$(y,x);:GOTO 50                                       11B3
270 char=INSTR("mjzigqAkbcCtGRd&&&x&hwS&nvVyHRf",in$)                                    1D4C
280 IF char>0 THEN GOTO 310                                                              0915
290 char=INSTR("aesr",in$):char=5*char:IF char>10 THEN char=char+6                        18E9
300 IF char=6 THEN PRINT CHR$(7):GOTO 50                                                 0DCE
```

then be merged with your BASIC programs to give you impressive screen lay-outs.

Our picture of the PCW keyboard serves the double function of showing what you can do with the system and showing where to find all the different characters on the key-board. It works in a pretty logical way with the letters Q,T,B and Z giving you the corner units for the double line squares and E,G,C and A giving the joining lines. Press [SHIFT] with E,G,C and A and you get the joint units.

Move one key across (starting at W for the top left corner) and you get the same layout for the single line boxes – again using [SHIFT] for the joint units. Finally the units to combine double and single lines are to be found in J,K,I and M. It is much easier to experiment to see how it works than explain.

Moving around the screen is achieved using < and > (just left of [RETURN]), @ for down and ] for up. Quite logical when you see it. If you just use these normally the cursor will move about as if using the cursor keys but press [SHIFT] and it will delete any character it passes over. You can also overwrite any mistakes by just typing in a new character. ■

Although this program works quite successfully it obviously is a bit cumbersome printing out say CHR$(133) separately every time you want to use it. It is far quicker to use `PRINT STRING$(20,CHR$(133))` to print out 20 in a row. You might tidy up your listing manually after you've created the lay-out or perhaps some clever person will have the time and the inclination to write this into the program.

```
310 char=128+char:in$=CHR$(char)                                        09A4
320 IF in$=CHR$(13) THEN p$(y,x)=CHR$(13):t(y,x)=13:x=0:y=y+1:GOTO 240  1887
330 PRINT FNat$(y,x);in$;:p$(y,x)=in$:t(y,x)=text                       12E6
340 IF y>bottom THEN bottom=y:GOTO 160 ELSE GOTO 160                    1458
350 FOR y=0 TO bottom                                                   079F
360 newline=0:set=0:LPRINT:PRINT #1,"":GOSUB 680:length=11              161F
370 FOR x=0 TO 90                                                       059F
380 IF newline=1 THEN GOTO 490                                          0A95
390 IF p$(y,x)<>CHR$(13) THEN 410                                       09F9
400 t(y,x)=0:newline=1:ltab=0:IF x>0 THEN PRINT CHR$(27);CHR$(68);" ";:GOTO 490 ELSE GOTO 490
                                                                        213E
410 IF p$(y,x)="" THEN IF ltab=1 THEN settab=1:GOTO 490 ELSE GOTO 490   17CD
420 x$=STR$(x+1):x$=RIGHT$(x$,LEN(x$)-1)                                0D19
430 IF ltab=0 THEN IF x>0 THEN LPRINT "tab(";x$;");";:PRINT #1,"tab(";x$;");";:length=length+8 E
LSE GOTO 440 ELSE GOTO 450                                              29AE
```

```
440 GOSUB 530:ltab=1:GOTO 490                                           097C
450 IF settab=1 THEN LPRINT "tab(";x$;");";:PRINT #1,"tab(";x$;");";:length=length+8:GOSUB 530:s
ettab=0:GOTO 490 ELSE GOSUB 530
                                                                        2C7F
460 IF length>200 THEN length=0:ELSE 490                                0E76
470 IF t(y,x)<>-1 THEN LPRINT:PRINT #1,"":GOSUB 680:GOTO 490            159C
480 LPRINT CHR$(34);";":PRINT #1,CHR$(34):GOSUB 680:LPRINT CHR$(34);:PRINT #1,CHR$(34);  1E15
490 NEXT x                                                              0377
500 NEXT y                                                              0367
510 PRINT #1,CHR$(13)                                                   0626
520 CLOSE:END                                                           052B
530 IF p$(y,x+1)=CHR$(13) THEN set=1                                    0B65
540 char$=STR$(ASC(p$(y,x))):char$=RIGHT$(char$,LEN(char$)-1)           135D
550 IF t(y,x)<>1 THEN 580                                               081F
560 LPRINT "CHR$(";char$;")";:PRINT #1,"CHR$(";char$;")";:length=length+10:IF set=0 THEN LPRINT
";";:PRINT #1,";";:RETURN                                               2B95
```

```
570 IF set=0 THEN LPRINT ";";:PRINT #1,";";:RETURN                      1217
580 IF t(y,x)=-1 THEN GOTO 590 ELSE RETURN                              0F58
590 IF x>0 THEN GOTO 600 ELSE GOTO 660                                  0CDF
600 IF t(y,x-1)=-1 THEN 620                                             0839
610 z$=CHR$(34)+p$(y,x):LPRINT z$;:PRINT #1,z$;:length=length+2 ELSE LPRINT p$(y,x);:PRINT #1,p$
(y,x);:length=length+1
                                                                        2A92
620 IF set=1 THEN LPRINT CHR$(34);:PRINT #1,CHR$(34);:                  13BA
630 IF x<91 THEN IF t(y,x+1)=13 THEN PRINT CHR$(34);";":length=length+1 :GOTO 650  1DC8
640 IF t(y,x+1)<>-1 THEN LPRINT CHR$(34);";":PRINT #1,CHR$(34);";":IF p$(y,x+1)="" THEN settab
=1
                                                                        1D65
650 RETURN                                                              03C0
660 PRINT CHR$(34);p$(y,x);:LPRINT CHR$(34);p$(y,x);:PRINT #1,CHR$(34);p$(y,x);  1A1D
670 length=length+2:RETURN                                              0AE9
680 lines=lines+incr:LPRINT lines;" PRINT ";:PRINT #1,lines;" PRINT ";:RETURN  1ECE
```

# How to type in a listing

Load up Mallard BASIC – to do that, insert your CP/M disc, reset the machine and at the A> prompt type BASIC[RETURN]. Now you see the 'Ok' prompt. Just type in the lines of the listing exactly as they are printed on the page (but not the numbers on the extreme right). Type LIST at any time to print out your typing so far to the screen; if you want a printout to pore over, type LLIST.

Mistakes made before you press RETURN can be corrected with the DEL keys, otherwise you have to use the line editor. Suppose you've made a mistake in line 100; type EDIT 100 and then you can use the cursor keys and DEL keys to correct it. Press RETURN when the line is OK. To delete a whole line, type its number only and press RETURN.

When you've fininshed, save the program to a disc by the command SAVE "FRED (or any other suitable name of eight letters or less). To run the program, type RUN.

Programs rarely run first time, but when BASIC encounters a mistake it tells you where it is. 'Syntax Error in line 60' means a mistake in that line (though the actual typing error may have occurred in a previous line, causing problems in this one). Other error messages can often occur too. Use the EDIT command to correct it.

You can rerun the program another day by loading BASIC up as before and, with the disc on which you saved the program in the drive, typing LOAD "FRED and then RUN.

# PLOT ROUTINE

by Lawrence Simons

One major drawback in Mallard BASIC is the absence of a PLOT command – a command that allows you to switch a pixel on or off at a specific place on the screen. But now there is thanks to the sterling work of Mr Simons of London. What he has produced is a bit of machine code that works the same as the PLOT command in a Sinclair Spectrum (if anyone admits to remembering such things).

The idea is that once you have typed in the machine code routine (the really complicated looking bit from line 50000) you can run this using a GOSUB routine (see line 10). You have three variables to set. For the x axis (how far across the screen) you use x%, and for the y axis you set y%. As the screen is 720 pixels wide by 256 pixels high, x% has to be between 0 and 719 and y% has to be between 0 and 255. The program will ignore anything beyond these limits.

The final variable is f% which decides whether to switch the pixel on or off. If f%=1 you switch on; 0 switches off. Any other number and it will reverse the situation – if it finds a pixel on it switches it off and vice versa.

GOSUB to the machine code once and then every time thereafter you put CALL PLOT (x%,y%,f%) it will switch the pixel at x% across and y% down on or off.

Now, switching individual pixels on and off by itself may not seem too impressive – but if you use it with a formula (as in the examples) you can produce impressive graphics in boring old Mallard. Perhaps not the fastest way of producing circles or ellipses but it saves you having to take a crash course in GSX and it is more fun than learning LOGO.

No doubt we will see some ingenious uses appearing in listings over the next few months.■

```
10 GOSUB 50000 :x0=360:y0=128:f%=1                                  0961
20 PRINT CHR$(27)+"e";CHR$(27)+"E";CHR$(27)+"f";                    0BD5
30 FOR a=0 TO 6.2832 STEP 0.005                                     0974
40 x%=CINT(x0+350*COS(a)):y%=CINT(y0+120*SIN(a))                    0FD5
50 CALL PLOT(x%,y%,f%):NEXT                                         08D9
60 y%=y0:FOR x%=x0-350 TO x0+350:CALL plot(x%,y%,f%):NEXT           1169
70 x%=x0:FOR y%=y0-120 TO y0+120:CALL plot(x%,y%,f%):NEXT           1136
80 PRINT CHR$(27)+"e";CHR$(27)+"1";CHR$(27)+"Y"+CHR$(59)+CHR$(32):END 11B4
50000 MEMORY &HBFFF:plot=&HC000:A=PLOT:E=0                          0F5F
50010 RESTORE 50120                                                 05C2
50020 FOR f=0 TO 14                                                 0537
50030 s=0                                                           024B
50040 FOR G=0 TO 7                                                  052C
50050 READ X$:X=VAL("&H"+X$)                                        0789
50060 S=S+X:POKE A,X:A=A+1:NEXT                                     0B3C
50070 READ X$: IF S<>VAL("&H"+X$) THEN E=E+1:PRINT "Error in Line";10*(F+5015) 19F7
50080 NEXT                                                          02D2
50090 IF E=0 THEN RETURN                                            0922
50100 PRINT E; "ERROR";:IF E=1 THEN PRINT ELSE PRINT "S"            12FD
50110 STOP                                                          02C6
```

```
50120 DATA 0A,32,7C,C0,4E,23,46,21,250                              0887
50130 DATA CF,02,A7,ED,42,D8,ED,43,4AF                              09B1
50140 DATA 78,C0,EB,5E,23,56,7A,A7,41B                             0994
50150 DATA C0,93,3D,5F,ED,53,7A,C0,469                             094F
50160 DATA F3,ED,73,7D,C0,31,9D,C0,51E                             095C
50170 DATA 01,36,C0,CD,5A,FC,B9,00,403                             0953
50180 DATA ED,7B,7D,C0,FB,C9,2A,7A,50D                             09F3
50190 DATA C0,29,11,00,B6,19,5E,23,24A                             0823
50200 DATA 56,7B,E6,F8,CB,27,CB,12,47E                             08FC
50210 DATA 47,7B,E6,07,B0,5F,2A,78,360                             08CD
50220 DATA C0,45,7D,E6,F8,6F,EB,19,4D3                             0955
50230 DATA 78,E6,07,3C,47,AF,37,1F,2ED                             09C0
50240 DATA 10,FD,47,3A,7C,C0,A7,20,391                             08E7
50250 DATA 05,78,2F,A6,77,C9,3D,78,347                             0926
50260 DATA 20,03,B6,77,C9,AE,77,C9,407                             091B
```

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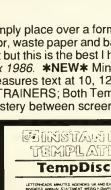


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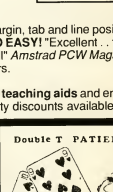


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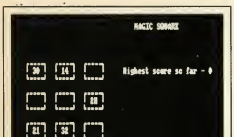


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# MAGIC SQUARE

by Steve Williams

You remember those clever magic squares, the three by three squares of numbers where every row, column and diagonal comes to the same total. Here is your chance to pit your mathematical prowess against the PCW in a mind crunching game to create magic squares.

The idea is that the program throws up a three by three grid with five of the figures filled in. All you have to do is fill in the last four numbers to get everything to add up correctly. Sounds pretty easy. The computer does know the answer but it won't tell you until you put in the wrong answers of course.

The game comes in four levels of difficulty from a very simple level one to very difficult level four. If you get stuck you can even call up the line totals but that is cheating really. Much more fun spending hours working it out in your head.■

```
10 hi=0:cls$=CHR$(27)+"E"+CHR$(27)+"H":PRINT cls$                              0E71
20 x=PEEK(64503!)+(PEEK(64504!)*60):RANDOMIZE x                                0B59
30 tl$=CHR$(150):m$=CHR$(146):tr$=CHR$(156):up$=CHR$(145):bl$=CHR$(147)        13AD
40 br$=CHR$(153):DEF FNat$(x,y)=CHR$(27)+"Y"+CHR$(32+y)+CHR$(32+x)             1240
50 GOSUB 370                                                                   041E
60 PRINT:PRINT FNat$(0,22) "Which level do you want. 1-4 ":mx%=4:GOSUB 440     1B3A
70 PRINT cls$:GOSUB 370:ON opt% GOSUB 380,390,400,430                          1067
80 PRINT FNat$(35,7)"Highest score so far -";hi                                1124
90 k=6:FOR j=1 TO 3:GOSUB 330:NEXT:k=10:FOR j=1 TO 3:GOSUB 330:NEXT:k=14       18E2
100 k=14:FOR j=1 TO 3:GOSUB 330:NEXT                                           0989
110 GOSUB 350:PRINT FNat$(9,7);a;PRINT FNat$(17,7);b:PRINT FNat$(25,11);f      188C
120 PRINT FNat$(9,15);g:PRINT FNat$(17,15);h                                   0EF3
130 tot=a+b+c:PRINT FNat$(0,24)"1. Show line total. 2. Do not show line total.":mx%=2  1D6F
140 GOSUB 440:ON opt% GOSUB 460,150                                            0A98
150 PRINT FNat$(0,28)"Input your 4 numbers - (Remember to put a comma between each.)"  1F59

160 INPUT;cs,ds,es,is                                                          08FC
170 PRINT FNat$(25,7)cs;:PRINT FNat$(9,11);ds:PRINT FNat$(17,11);es:PRINT FNat$(25,15);is  1E33
180 sc=0:IF a+b+c=tot THEN sc=sc+1                                             0CB2
190 IF ds+e+f=tot THEN sc=sc+1                                                 0ACB
200 IF g+h+i=tot THEN sc=sc+1                                                  0A6C
210 IF a+ds+g=tot THEN sc=sc+1                                                 0AE3
220 IF b+es+h=tot THEN sc=sc+1                                                 0AF0
230 IF c+f+is=tot THEN sc=sc+1                                                 0B3F
240 IF a+es+i=tot THEN sc=sc+2                                                 0AF7
250 IF g+es+c=tot THEN sc=sc+2                                                 0B7D
260 PRINT FNat$(35,11)"Score = ";sc;" out of a possible 10."                   1338
270 PRINT FNat$(35,13)"Numbers were - ";c;d;e;i;" Line total was - ";tot       1935
280 IF sc>hi THEN hi=sc:PRINT FNat$(57,7);hi                                   0FE2
290 IF sc=10 THEN PRINT FNat$(35,15)"Well done! This is the maximum score."    1B52
300 PRINT FNat$(35,17)"Another go? - Y/N"                                      0D3E

310 K$=INKEY$:IF K$="" THEN 310                                                0784
320 K$=UPPER$(K$):IF K$="Y" THEN 10 ELSE PRINT cls$:END                        133A
330 PRINT FNat$(8*j,k);tl$;m$;m$;m$;tr$:PRINT FNat$(8*j,k+1);up$;"    ";up$   182C
340 PRINT FNat$(8*j,k+2);bl$;m$;m$;m$;br$:RETURN                               130F
350 i=b+x:d=i+x:g=b+y:e=g+x:c=e+x:f=g+y:a=f+x:h=a+x:RETURN                      16C1
360 RETURN                                                                     03BF
370 t$="MAGIC SQUARE":PRINT TAB((90-LEN(t$))/2)t$:RETURN                       1333
380 x=0:y=2:b=INT(RND*5):RETURN                                                0BBB
390 x=INT(RND*3):y=x+2:b=INT(RND*5):RETURN                                     116F
400 x=INT(RND*10)                                                              057F
410 y=INT(RND*10):IF y=x THEN 410                                              0BB2
420 b=INT(RND*10):RETURN                                                       08C7
430 x=INT(RND*15):y=x+5:b=INT(RND*15):RETURN                                   11B1
440 X$="":WHILE X$="" OR VAL(X$)<1 OR VAL(X$)>mx%                              0EF2
450 X$=INKEY$:WEND:opt%=VAL(X$):RETURN                                         0E04
460 PRINT FNat$(0,26)"Each line totals - ";tot:RETURN                          1422
```

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# The PCW9512 Rescue Kit

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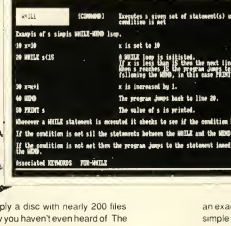
# JUMBO

Anyone who has dabbled with Mallard BASIC will have come across the moment of truth when they just can't remember – what is the difference between SPACE$ and SPC, which number is which after MID$, or even, how do you switch on a switched-off cursor blob?? Maybe there is someone who can remember every command in Mallard but they certainly don't work for 8000 Plus.

Now since the launch of the Jumbo disc you have two choices 1) You can use the old method of spending 10 minutes looking for the BASIC method, another five minutes finding the right command other 15 minutes discovering you're still not totally sure of the syntax and a final 20 minutes working out how it works by trial and error. By which time of course you have probably forgotten what you wanted to do in the first place. Or

2) Use Jumbo – and find out what the command does in 2 minutes. Jumbo is simply a disc with nearly 200 files listing every command in BASIC including a few you haven't even heard of. The idea is that when you get stuck for the right command or syntax you just call up the directory (type |cd). This is in effect a listof file names




If you want to find out what Fetch KEYS does you check the list and find that there with the details on this command kept in the file FKEY (you can see in the directory listings from the name Fetch KEYS comes FKEY) then just write |FKEY and it appears

Or if you want all the Jetsam commands a file covering all the escape codes for useful functions (everything from reversing the screen to defining a window) and a file with the full ASCII code and character set. There is also a page of keywords on various topics and a run-down on the bit-wise operators (AND, OR etc). The advantage is you call these up without affecting your working on the program

The idea is basically so simple you feel as if you could do it yourself. There is no program or anything too clever – it is simply the basic (or BASIC) facts simply laid out with an example where suitable (by far the best way to understand them). A simple way to learn BASIC

*8000 Plus issue 20 May 1988*

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# TIP OFFS

## More hot tips than a factory full of soldering irons

**Short circuited in Mini Office? Power losses in LocoScript? Feeling a resistance to CP/M? Don't blow a fuse, come to TipOffs, the most electric pages in the PCW circuit. And if you know a sneaky way to step up LocoScript, or get the sparks flying in any current program, let us know – the hottest win £30! This month's live wire is Leon Cych who tells Stop Press owners how to get any font you like.**

### Do the splits

Ever found a LocoScript document growing dangerously long – over 15k say – and thought best to split it *before* getting that dreadful 'Disc is full' message when you come to save? Here's what to do.

Suppose you have a document HUGE.DOC to be split in half. First find the number of pages in it – put the cursor over the document in the disc manager screen and press P for 'Print', selecting 'Print some pages'. The number of the Last Page is shown; take note of it and cancel the print instruction with [CAN].

Now copy the whole document to the M drive with [f3] and give the new name as SECOND.BIT or something appropriate.

Edit HUGE.DOC by pressing E and move to a halfway point in the text. You want to move to a page halfway through, ie. roughly half the number of pages shown back in the 'Print' instruction above. In LocoScript 2 you can do this with [f5], 'Find page' – in LocoScript 1 you just press [PAGE] the appropriate number of times (ie. three times to move to the top of page four, and so on) and wait for it to scroll through to the required place. To make the break occur at a sensible place rather than the middle of a sentence you can move the cursor to somewhere appropriate.

Now you can cut out the rest of this document and save just the first half. Press [CUT], then [DOC], then [CUT] again. Wait until Loco finishes its stuff and [EXIT], finishing edit. Rename the now truncated HUGE.DOC as FIRST.BIT ([f5] in Loco 1, [f3] in Loco 2).

Now move over to SECOND.BIT, which is a copy of your old HUGE.DOC of course, and press E for Edit. Press [CUT] and move to the same place as your cutting began in the other document. You can do this either by pressing [PAGE] the appropriate number of times, or by pressing [FIND] and giving a short piece of text from around the halfway point. Press [CUT] again and the first half will disappear slowly leaving just the second half of the document. [EXIT] and finish edit; finally move SECOND.BIT back to the same group as the FIRST.BIT ([f4] in Loco 1, [f3] in Loco 2).

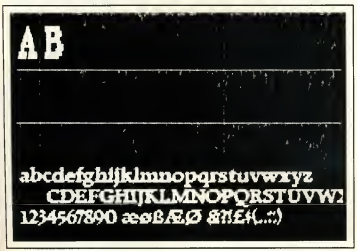
Your old HUGE.DOC is now split into two equal parts, FIRST.BIT and SECOND.BIT. A lot quicker and easier than it looks, but well worth it!

**Marie Strong**
**Nottingham**

### Stop Press fonts

Here is way to get any font you want for the DTP package Stop Press. You will need to have a copy of Stop Press, Masterscan, and something with your desired font printed out – but it *must* allow photocopying or be out of author's or artist's copyright. The letters should ideally each be a little less than an inch high and four-tenths of an inch wide.

Photocopy the page with the alphabet and scan it using Masterscan. If the results are good you can load the result into Stop Press using the Paste facility. Then proceed using the cutout facility, cutting out and saving individual letters using a 31x31 or smaller pixel window (to enable you to use the kerning facility) onto a data disc called after your alphabet.




Lastly bring up the typeface designer in Stop Press and then one by one load up the letters you want and paste them into the appropriate designer grid, making sure they are up against the left side of each window box.

Once this is complete, save the whole typeface and there you have it.

Things to look out for are: don't leave on the cutout window facility or your cutout will paste on to the grid where you don't want it; watch the size that you scan the alphabets – they may be too big to go in the grid; use the Stop Press variable stretch facility to tailor the letters; be careful lining up the letters pasted onto the grid; make sure you get the descenders etc. in the right place.'

This system can also be used to link cut-outs to letters on the keyboard so that you can key in any image from your keyboard.

**Leon Cych**
**London**

### Date line

Many CP/M programs – databases, for instance, or accounts packages – require you to enter the date for that day. Many users will have to do this hundreds of times a day, which is rather tedious and prone to error. SETKEYS suggests itself, to make one key return the date automatically, but it would be awkward and unhelpful to assistants to expect them to fiddle with RPED etc. every day.

A solution is as follows. Insert the following lines in your PROFILE.SUB file:

```
;Please type the
```

```
A)type profile.sub
;Please type the following:
;E 135 "01/01/88"[RETURN][ALT]Z
;(substituting today's date)
pip date.key=con:
setkeys date.key

A)submit profile

A)Please type the following:
A)E 135 "01/01/88"[RETURN][ALT]Z
A);(substituting today's date)
A)pip date.key=con:
E 135 "08/08/88"
A)setkeys date.key

A)
```

following:
```
;E 135 "01/01/88"
[RETURN][ALT]Z
;(substituting today's
date)
PIP DATE.KEY=CON:
SETKEYS DATE.KEY
```
Of course you'll need PIP.COM and SETKEYS.COM on your startup disc. The semi colons in the first lines are vital and make CP/M regard the text following as a comment, not an instruction.

When you startup, follow the instructions and type `E 135 "08/08/88"` or whatever the date is when prompted. From then on pressing [f7] will return the date.

This procedure will not interfere with your normal SETKEYS file so long as you select a key that is not included in that file (alternative numbers to 135 would be 136 for [f8], 134 for [f6] etc.)

This can easily be adapted for any string that needs to be changed frequently. It doesn't work with all CP/M programs (for example, it won't work with Mini Office) but works nicely in BASIC.

**Brian Haylett**
**Great Yarmouth, Norfolk**

## It creases me up

A tip for all those who find that folding a sheet of A4 into three results in a frustrating mess of creases and smudged text.

Just set up a small document called FOLDS or something with an empty header zone of six lines, the left margin set to zero and a line pitch of 6 (this is the normal setting LocoScript uses, so if you haven't changed any of these settings in your TEMPLATE.STD these will be set already for you).

In Editing mode, press [RETURN] repeatedly until you are at line 19, then enter a hyphen; press [RETURN] again until you reach line 42, where you enter an underline character ([SHIFT] plus hyphen). Keep FOLDS with your letter templates.

With the top of the paper exactly level with the bail bar, just print FOLDS.LET on the back of any letter or document that must be folded into three to fit in an A4 envelope. Using the marks as a guideline you can fold the letter and it will slide easily into the tightest of envelopes.

**Simon Paul Nicholson**
**Langley, Slough**

## Time is money

You can save a few microseconds when inserting the date into your LocoScript letter by having the position prepared on your TEMPLATE.STD.

After putting in your address, do 3 [RETURNS] and [+]RJ (or [+]RA in LocoScript 2). Save this document. When you now call up your Letters template all you have to do is press [PAGE] and the cursor will jump to the correct position for you to type in the date.

**V G Llebrecht**
**London**

## Heavy breathing

One of the problems with LocoScript 2's otherwise excellent range of characters is that there is no facility to put breathing marks in Greek.

Well, actually there is – all you need is Locochar, the character redesigner, regularly advertised by Locomotive in 8000 Plus.

```
In place of small circled numerals insert breathings and
accents as required : viz Hard ", Soft ', Hard with acute ",
Soft with acute ', Hard with grave ", Soft with grave ', Hard
with circumflex ", Soft with circumflex ", Circumflex alone ~.
The remaining accents (Acute ' and Grave ` alone and Iota
subscript ,) can be placed over letters in the ordinary way.
```

Install this character set on a LocoScript 'Start of day' disc. When writing a line of Greek, at the end of a line make line space zero with [+]LS0. Then [RETURN] and write the required breathings under their respective letters, with spaces in between. On screen they appear below the appropriate letter, but will print out on top. Don't use proportional spacing as this will throw out the correspondence of letter and breathing.

At the end of the line of breathings, restore the line spacing to normal with [-]LS, press [RETURN], and continue. Repeat the process for each line.

This works well for most breathings but one with a circumflex may be hard to distinguish. As the breathings are fed in with the [EXTRA] key it doesn't matter that you're in Greek super shift mode. It isn't perfect, but there is no way to make up a whole set of vowels with circumflex and breathings; there just is not enough space.

**Rev David Warner**
**Whitchurch, Hants**

```
                EXAMPLE

Luke 23: 4-5
ὁ δὲ Πειλᾶτος εἶπεν πρὸς τοὺς ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ τοὺς ὄχλους Οὐδὲν
εὑρίσκω αἴτιον ἐν τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ τούτῳ.  οἱ δὲ ἐπίσχυον λέγοντες
ὅτι Ἀνασείει τὸν λαόν, διδάσκων καθ' ὅλης τῆς Ἰουδαίας καὶ
ἀρξάμενος ἀπὸ τῆς Γαλιλαίας ἕως ὧδε.
```

## It's a non-starter

There is an alternative way of stopping self-starting discs from running a program to pressing the [STOP] key just before the A> prompt appears.

If you flip the write protect tab on the top of the disc before inserting it the PROFILE.SUB will stop with a harmless CP/M error message (it is unable to write a temporary file to the disc needed to run the PROFILE.SUB). Press C to cancel and Robert is your mother's brother.

**Chris Quinn**
**Huyton, Merseyside**

## Cooking hint

Copyholders are useful things for anyone consulting one document while typing another – while copy typing, or trying a tip off, perhaps. If you're about to buy a copyholder, have a look in your kitchen first – perspex cook-book holders do just as well. They are the right size, easily movable and hold fat books just as well as thin ones. So if your partner isn't busy cooking you may have the instant answer to your copy holding problems.

**Judith Turner**
**Harrogate**

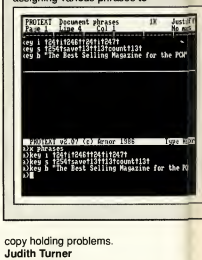
As you sit lazily PCWing on your desert island, one day a Protext disc is washed up on shore. Which eight Protext tips would you have with you? Here are eight old favourites...

## Phrases

Phrases in Protext are rather more straightforward than in LocoScript. If you want to produce the phrase 'The Best Selling Magazine for the PCW' with one (OK, two) keypresses, viz. [EXTRA]B then you just type directly in command mode `KEY B "The Best Selling Magazine for the PCW"`[RETURN]. If you begin it with KEY C it would assign the phrase to C, KEY D would assign it to D and so on.

## Or...

Alternatively you can make a file called PHRASES or anything else you like, consisting of a number of the above lines assigning various phrases to




## CAT in L

A tip for Protext users fed up of seeing the file they want to find the name of disappear off the top of the catalogue screen before they can press [STOP] or note down the exact name. By Sod's Law the one you want is always somewhere at the bottom of one column or at the top of the next, just as the road to the party is always just across the edge of the map page.

So, instead of typing `CAT` or pressing [f1], first type in the word `SPON`[RETURN] then press [f1] *twice*. When the screen stops scrolling, type `SPOFF`[RETURN]. This creates a file of the full directory which can be viewed in its entirety and at leisure simply by

## Desert Island TipOffs

various letters, and at any time type `X PHRASES` (or whatever name) to activate the phrases contained in that file. If you get a 'phrase too long' message you'll have to delete some of the phrases from letters you're not using to make space for the new ones. To delete the phrase from, say, F, type `KEY F ""`[RETURN].

If you call your phrases file EXFILE then the phrases will be loaded whenever Protext starts up.

### One word

You can make Protext italicise or embolden the word you've just typed with one keypress. Just type in command mode (or put into your startup or a phrase file) the line `KEY I ^24^I^246^ ^24^I^247^` (the ^ is [EXTRA] plus a semicolon). On pressing [EXTRA]`I` Protext places an italics code, moves back to the beginning of the word, places another italics code, and moves back to the end of the word again.

Obviously you can use the same idea for bold or underline by substituting B or U for each occurrence of I above, whence [EXTRA]`B` will embolden and [EXTRA]`U` will underline words.

### Saved

Another useful command to type in directly in command mode or put into a phrases file as above is `KEY S ^254^save^13^^13^count ^13^`. On pressing [EXTRA]`S` you move into command mode, save the current file under its correct name, then count the words in it, with one key press.

### The Count

To count the total words in chapters 1 to 6 of your book, make a file called COUNT.TOT say containing the lines.

```
1 chapter 6
merge chapter 5
merge chapter 4 etc. down to
merge chapter 1
count
```

then to get your total just type `X COUNT.TOT`. If it's a big book, leave lots of space on the M drive!

### Sorting words

You can sort a list of words into alphabetical order in Protext as follows. First copy the file containing the words to be sorted in to the M drive. Then run Prospell and take the 'Initialise dictionary' option from the dictionary utilities submenu. Insert a fresh formatted disc in the A drive. Now take the 'Build Dictionary' option from the main prospell menu and from 'build dictionary or file' choose 'file'.

With your new blank 'dictionary' in the A drive, and your file of words to be sorted in the M drive, answer the prompts for input and output file names. (The input can be a straight LocoScript file, but the output will be ASCII.)

### Black prints

When printing addresses from a mail merge run onto envelopes, you may find that whatever the page length, the printer always thinks it's printing on A4 paper – the platen rolls round for several seconds after each address, which is irritating and time-consuming.

The solution is in the stored commands at the top of your address mail merge skeleton:

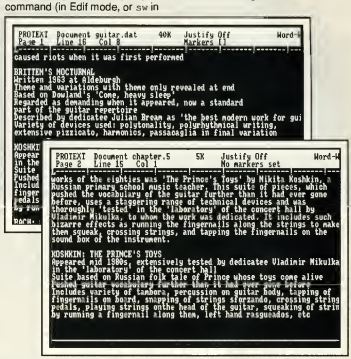
```
>pl 15
(blank)
>oc 27,67,15
>sm 35
>sv name address1 (etc)
&name&
&address1& (etc)
```

Those top three lines will make sure the printer knows the page length is 15. .

### Free!

Protext turns into a 'free text database' if you use the [ALT]`Y` command (in Edif mode, or `sw` in command mode). If switches over to another working area – you can load and edit files as normal, then swop back to the original area with [ALT]`Y` or `sw` again.

So, keep a datafile in one area and your working file in the other. You can mark out blocks of text and copy them across to the other with [ALT]`C`. The blocks don't get removed from the datafile. In combination with Protext's powerful [FIND] facilities this makes it ideal for anyone who needs a database of large amounts of text for research or creative writing.




loading in the normal way, ie. by typing `L CAT`[RETURN] (or even just `L` followed by a space and then [f1]). You can then print out a catalogue of the disc by pressing `P`.

**Ian Goodhardt**
**Stanmore, Middlesex**

## BASIC tips

When editing long BASIC programs, there is always the danger that you could delete a line number which is still referred to by a GOSUB or GOTO from elsewhere in the program.

```
renum 5760,5760
Undefined line 5700 in 4050
Undefined line 2200 in 4600
Ok
list 4050
4050 IF y=0 THEN GOTO 5700
Ok
list 4600
4600 IF x=0 THEN GOSUB 2200
Ok
```

Rather than find out the hard way when the program is running, simply RENUM the last line as itself – eg. RENUM 45090,45090. This has no effect on the program, but will display for you a list of all the line numbers which the program tries to find but which have been deleted, letting you check for unexecutable GOSUBs and GOTOs.

The same technique can be used to check, for example, which lines a subroutine has been called from. If you delete the first line of the subroutine (having SAVEd the program first) then RENUM as above, every line containing a GOSUB to that missing line will be listed.

Make a note or a screen dump (printout of the screen with [EXTRA][PTR], only on an 8000 of course) then re-load the program to reinstate the deleted line.

Another tip is to make the first line of your BASIC program `1 SAVE "TEMP` – every time you run the program, it will be saved onto disc as TEMP.BAS. So, even if it crashes on running, you'll have the most recent version saved on disc. When it's working you can delete the line 1 and save the program under a suitable name.

**Chris Shipp**
**Kingsbridge, Devon**

## Do not feed the lines

While working with CP/M you often want to write short text files – PROFILE.SUB files for example. Instead of using RPED to do this, you can use PIP which is much quicker. Suppose you want a PROFILE.SUB consisting of two lines: SETKEYS ZAP.KEY and then ZAP. You can just type `PIP PROFILE.SUB=CON:` and then type `SETKEYS ZAP.KEY`[RETURN] followed by `ZAP`[RETURN]. Finish with [ALT]`Z`. You can't delete a character once entered so this method isn't good for long files.

A drawback with this method is that while typing in your program the [RETURN] key only returns the cursor to the beginning of the line, without moving it down one. The PROFILE.SUB works fine though when you TYPE it to the screen you get every line overprinted on the last.

For legibility, follow each [RETURN] with an [ALT]`J` which produces the desired line feed.

**P J Elce**
**Newton Abbot, Devon** ■

**These pages provide a comprehensive guide to the Amstrad PCW software. Published in three monthly parts, this time it's the turn of Word Processors (including Desk Top Publishers), Accounts/Payroll packages and Utilities. We've set out to cover every important piece of software we could lay our hands on, and to give you enough information to decide whether they are suitable for you.**

**All software will run on both the 9512 and the 8000 series machines, though the former's daisywheel printer cannot print graphical output.**

**The selection isn't comprehensive, but the software listed here represents what we think is the best of that currently available.**

**As well as a brief summary of what they do, the main Plus and Minus points for each program are listed – Pluses have a ▲ by them, Minuses a ▼. Those we think are particularly noteworthy have a corner flash. Have fun window shopping!**

# •WORDPROCESSORS•

LocoScript already comes bundled with its own word processor, so you might not think of buying another one as a priority. In fact, whatever you may have read in some magazines, LocoScript is a pretty good wordprocessor and you won't find many editing and layout functions it doesn't have. Its principal disadvantage was its slowness, but the release of Locoscript 2 has lessened that.

There are advantages to be had in changing. LocoScript cannot run from CP/M, and this may cause you trouble.

Many other word processors have a built-in 'mailmerger' program. This is a way of doing bulk mailshots; you store your address list in a data file, and write a letter with labelled gaps where you want the names and addresses to go. Then, when you print, the letter comes out once for each address, with the information in its correct place. Also, you often get a spelling checker thrown in free – look for one which allows its dictionary to be modified so you can include non-American spellings.

One thing's for sure, whatever word processor you buy it will be totally different to operate from LocoScript. The PCW keyboard is custom built to run it, and if you change you may have to get used to some arcane choices of keys to do even simple operations. Also, you won't be able (very easily) to use all the printer styles that you can in LocoScript, though there will be enough to get by with.

## LOCOSCRIPT 2

**£19.95 ● Locomotive Software ● 0306 740606**

As bundled with new 9512, the new version of everyone s first word processor. If you know how LocoScript 1 works, you'll have minimal relearning to do, and it puts right (almost) all the defects of the old version at a rock bottom price. Greek and Cyrillic alphabets, and version 2.12 even lets you define up to sixteen characters of your own design.

PLUSES ● MINUSES

▲ 'Find page' command makes moving around faster
▲ Superb range of foreign accents and symbols available
▲ Can now drive daisywheel and other printers
▲ Has DISCKIT's formatting and copying built into it
▲ New 300-page manual
▼ Mailmerger and spelling checker not included
▼ Inconvenient for regular CP/M users
▼ Still no word counter!
▼ Still slow at Find, Exchange and scrolling

## LOCOMAIL

**£29.95 ● Locomotive/Amsoft ● 0306 740606**

As a mailmerger for LocoScript, it is difficult to see how anything could be better than this. It runs directly from LocoScript, and can process any LocoScript commands. Has many advanced features and is highly recommended for all LocoScript users.

PLUSES ● MINUSES

▲ You don't have to run it from CP/M
▲ Can print any LocoScript text formatting commands
▲ Can automatically rejustify paragraphs after insertion
▲ Can insert numeric calculations into letters
▲ Can read data from non-LocoScript (ie. ASCII) files
▲ Large manual, with example files on disc
▼ Need separate program to sort and filter addresses before a print run

## LOCOSPELL

**£19.95 ● Locomotive/Amsoft ● 0306 740606**

The ultimate spelling checker for LocoScript users. It is run as a simple menu choice while you are editing a document normally, and you can check either an entire document or only a paragraph. When it finds an error, it suggests a correction. Reasonably fast, given LocoScript's inherent sloth.

PLUSES ● MINUSES

▲ Runs totally from within LocoScript
▲ Can do small sections of a file
▲ Suggests alternatives for misspelt words
▲ Reformats the text as it makes corrections
▲ Provides the much-missed LocoScript word counter
▼ Can't remove spellings you don't like (eg –ize) from dictionary
▼ The manual gets bogged down sometimes
▼ Slow at scrolling the dictionary window

## PROTEXT/ POCKET PROTEXT

**£59.95/£39.95 ● Arnor ● 0733 239011**

The best CP/M wordprocessor. Very fast at moving around large files, and packed with features. Works with key combinations rather than menus, but uses LocoScript keys too. Comes complete with a good spelling checker, a lightning fast word counter and a very powerful mailmerger. 'Pocket Protext' is a stripped down version – essentially the same word processing features, but no spell checker or mailmerger, and lacking one or two incidental facilities like two column printing. Specify which machine you have when buying.

PLUSES ● MINUSES

▲ Complete with spelling checker/word counter
▲ Packed with features, eg calculate facility, text editor for writing programs, 'print to screen' option etc
▲ Lets you work with two documents at once
▲ You can do all of CP/M's functions without ever leaving the word processor
▲ Very fast at moving around, doing exchanges and so on

## WORD PROCESSORS • ACCOUNTS/PAYROLL

▲ Extremely powerful and flexible mailmerger is almost a word processing programming language in its own right
▼ Forces you to learn another new set of control keys to use it
▼ Printing labels is virtually impossible
▼ Not as slick as LocoScript in its printer controls

# PROSPELL

**£29.95 ● Arnor ● 0733 239011**

A stand-alone spell checker for use with almost any wordprocessor that runs on the PCWs. Reads LocoScript, WordStar and ASCII files, and allows you to make corrections directly, view the context, change the dictionary etc. Specify which machine when buying.

PLUSES ● MINUSES
▲Checks LocoScript and WordStar documents directly.
▲Displays the context of a suspect word
▲Can edit misspellings directly from Prospell
▲Anagram and crossword solvers too
▼Processes files of 15K or more in sections

# MINI OFFICE

**£29.95 ● Database ● 0625 878888**

The word processor module of this five-program package is very fast and powerful, with a word counter, but suffers from a mass of bugs in file saving and printing (and proportionally spaced justified print takes ages), doesn't yet rival LocoScript or Protext

PLUSES ● MINUSES
▲ Very fast and packed with features
▲ Unlimited headers and footers (eg. for footnotes)
▲ Can access printer directly (eg. for graphics)
▲ Screen can show exactly what will be printed out, italics, bold, pitch changes and all
▼ Currently riddled with bugs in printing, file handling, etc
▼ No phrases facility

# TEMPDISC

**£11.95 ● Thurston Brown ● 0395 68385**

A set of ready-made TEMPLATE STDs made up of fancy patterns of exotic characters for you to embellish and use with LocoScript. Essentially for social/personal business use. You could win £10 from the suppliers by designing your own!

PLUSES ● MINUSES
▲ Using it tells you a lot about the intricacies of LocoScript
▲ You can get professional results easily
▼ You could write your own templates for free by reading the LocoScript manual

# EASY LABELLER

**£34.44 ● M.A.S.S. ● 0603 630768**

Labelling program which stores your names and address list and will print out in label format selected items from it.

PLUSES ● MINUSES
▲ Useful options like printing out current date
▲ Good search facilities
▲ Range of printing options will fit most stationery
▼ Data needs an entire disc to itself
▼ Data entry is slowed by constant returning to main menu

# LABEL PRINTER

**£25.00 ● Microdraw ● 0622 685481**

Very similar program to Easy Labeller if not quite as powerful. Usual features of a labeller and you can store comments with each label's data.

PLUSES ● MINUSES
▲ Menus simple – easy to get the program going
▲ Fast data entry
▲ Can store comments with each entry
▼ No import or export of data
▼ Data needs an entire disc to itself

# POCKET WORDSTAR

**£49.95 ● MicroPro/Davis Rubin ● 0386 853610**

For many business users, word processing means Word Star. Almost everything you could need in a text processor is here and despite the title this "Pocket" version has all the features of the original. Efficient and proven, but now showing its age and there are alternatives unless you are committed to WordStar already. £20 extra buys the De Luxe version with spell checker.

PLUSES ● MINUSES
▲ Probably the world's most widely used word-processor
▲ Documentation is complex but well-structured
▲ Includes a mail merge utility
▲ Keystroke commands fully described on on-screen menus
▲ You can save your own favourite customised version
▼ Doesn't make full use of the PCW keyboard and printer
▼ Page and margin formatting commands are awkward to use

# NEWWORD

**£69.00 ● NewStar Software ● 0277 220573**

NewWord exploits the WordStar market by doing the same job better. It uses much the same key commands as WordStar and will even edit documents prepared under WordStar. Comes with a spelling checker, and the on-screen help is better than WordStar's, though the keystrokes are still as obscure

PLUSES ● MINUSES
▲ Does everything WordStar does, even reads WordStar files
▲ Spelling checker included
▲ Can un-erase words and lines
▲ Onscreen help better than WordStar's
▲ Full reformatting of text within mailmerger
▼ Weak on use of keypad and printer support
▼ Like WordStar, formatting troubles and obscure commands

# ANSIBLEINDEX

**£49.50 ● Ansible Information ● 0602 62576**

Takes a LocoScript file and compiles an alphabetical index with page numbers from all the words marked. You mark the word to be indexed by using LocoScript's (+RV) code. The price includes the AnsibleCheck word counter/proof reader program too, which is also available separately at £19.50.

PLUSES ● MINUSES
▲ LocoScript documents don't have to be converted to ASCII
▲ Can 'invert' phrases, eg 'Smith, Fred' or 'Fred Smith'
▲ Can produce a single index over several different files
▼ Output index not LocoScript document – must convert it
▼ Can only index words appearing literally, not general topics

## •ACCOUNTS • PAYROLL •

# BOOK-KEEPING AND ACCOUNTS

**£57.50 (£80.50 with stock control) ● Manx Tapes ● 0624 813071**

Supplied with a very useful introductory demonstration disc, the program advocates a very traditional style of double-entry book-keeping. Program has high degree of flexibility.

PLUSES ● MINUSES
▲ Solid, traditional approach to double-entry book-keeping
▼ Program doesn't make full use of the PCW
▼ Screen prompts not always that helpful
▼ Written in BASIC, so prone to sluggishness

# CHECK ACCOUNTS PROGRAM

**£9.95 ● M E Hodges ● 03722 75053**

A much more detailed accounts package, which allows you to make forecasts and keep track of the interest charged on your personal finances. Simple to use and the program also allows you to jump to any time in order to work out any interest accumulated in the meantime.

PLUSES ● MINUSES
▲ Easy to learn from demonstration files supplied
▲ Interesting use of time scales
▼ Relatively slow screen update
▼ Only useful for the really organized

# DIGITA BUSINESS CONTROLLER

**£99.95 ● Digita International ● 0395 45059**

Not a full accounting system, but a very easy-to-use package with an excellent manual. Nominal ledger already set up and you can be up and running in minutes. No aged creditor/debtor lists can be produced, and problems with VAT handling– not really for VAT businesses. For other small business it's very good value.

PLUSES ● MINUSES
▲ Delight to use with a very good manual
▲ You can get the system working in minutes
▲ Financial ratios can be included in reports
▼ VAT handling very cumbersome, sut non-VAT business
▼ No facility for producing aged debtors/creditors list

# COMPACT ACCOUNTS

**£199.99 ● Compact Software Ltd ● 0703 611214**

Another very large integrated package supplied on several discs and consisting of sales, purchase and nominal ledger together with invoicing. The package is available on much larger micros, and since the format in which data is produced is the same as on PCWs, the system is particularly suitable for users planning to upgrade their hardware at a later date

PLUSES ● MINUSES
▲ Audit trails are an auditor's dream
▲ Data can be used in WordStar, Multiplan or SuperCalc 2.
▲ Superb prepayment facility
▲ Can run a number of companies separately
▲ Easily transported to bigger computers
▼ Lots of disc swapping necessary.
▼ Can be slow to use – it runs in Mallard Basic
▼ Quirks in cash allocation routine and account code system

# M.A.P. ACCOUNTS

**£149.95 ● MAP Systems ● 061 624 5662/3**

This is a very powerful package moved onto the PCW at a fraction of its cost on larger micros. The size makes it a little cumbersome to use, but apart from that there are very few significant problems. The integrated suite includes the same five modules as Camsoft, but they are supplied on four sides of disc, making it effectively impossible for the software to be run as an integrated system on an unexpanded 8256.

PLUSES ● MINUSES
▲ A very comprehensive and professional package
▲ Very good audit trails
▲ Sales/purchase ledgers can run over different period from nominal's.
▲ Facility for handling prepayments and accruals
▲ Able to print full management accounts
▼ The size of the programs means lots of disc swapping
▼ All normal responses need to be in upper case.

# CORNIX SIMPLE ACCOUNTS

**£49.95 ● Cornix ● 0462 682989**

Simple cash-book style package which allows you to keep track of debtors and creditors (though not aged ones). Simple to use and you can make changes if you make a mistake. Slow to use for complex operations and number of entries in given period is limited, but very good simple program for small businesses

PLUSES ● MINUSES
▲ Simple, easy-to-use program
▲ Can correct errors
▲ Keeps track of debtors and creditors
▼ Slow for complex operations
▼ Ability to alter figures won't please accounting purists

# ANAGRAM ACCOUNTS

**£86.25 ● Anagram Systems ● 0403 59551**

Sophisticated package for users familiar with accounts. Small details (discounts, VAT) handled well but no permanent records are kept on disc, you must use its report printing options

PLUSES ● MINUSES
▲ Invoice printing is easy
▲ Handles customer details efficiently
▼ Key presses are rather obscure
▼ Best to have some idea of accounts before using it

# CAMSOFT PSIL

**£149.95 ● Cambrian Software ● 0766 831878**

Consists of five integrated packages. Sales, purchase and nominal ledgers, invoicing and stock control. In terms of sophistication it falls somewhere between the Sagesoft package

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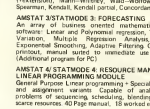
An array of business oriented mathematical and statistical software: Linear and Polynomial regression, Trend and Seasonal Variation, Multiple Regression Analysis, Transformations, Exponential Smoothing, Adaptive Filtering. Graphic display, full printout, manual suited to immediate use and for teaching (Additional program for PC)

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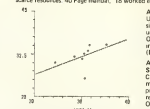
General Purpose Linear programming + Specialised Transportation and assignment variants. Capable of analysing and solving problems of sequencing, scheduling, blending and allocation of scarce resources. 40 Page manual, 18 worked examples




**AMSTAT 6/STATMODE 6: SPANOVA**
Up to 8–way analysis of variance for equal cell sizes. Unequal cell sizes up to 1–way AOV. Maximum of 3000 data points (300 on unexpanded CP/M 2.2, 4000 on PC). Input from ASCII Files. Output to screen or new ASCII file with full ANOV table + mean and interaction means and Newman–Keuls on main effects. Manual (Dec only).

**AMSTAT 7/STATMODE 7: RESOURCE MANAGEMENT II — STOCK AND PRODUCTION ANALYSIS**
Calculation of economic order quantities for both single and multiple items. Dynamic programming to calculate optimum production schedules for single items and consideration of several results into a multiple schedule. Also Pareto and Lorenz analysis. Output to screen or printer. Includes operational manual with worked examples.

The programs have applications in research of all kinds, education, sales, production planning, work and method study, financial planning, personnel, social work etc.

*"I will certainly be using them myself in the future and no reviewer can offer a warmer recommendation than that." Dr. Peter Morris, Amstrad Professional Computing, May 1987.*

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| AMSTAT3 | £35.95 | £27.95 | STATMODE3 | £39.95 |
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| AMSTAT7 | £25.95 | £27.95 | STATMODE7 | £29.95 |

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| Locospell | 18.50 |
| Mail Merge | 18.50 |
| Datastore | 28.50 |
| Database II | 77.00 |
| Mini Office Pro | 21.95 |

### PC 1640

| | |
|---|---|
| Single Mono | 520.00 |
| Double Mono | 673.00 |
| Single Colour | 667.00 |
| Double Colour | 820.00 |
| Single ECG | 814.00 |
| Double EEG | 905.00 |
| 20Mb Hardrive Mono | 977.00 |
| 20Mb Hardrive Colour | 1124.00 |
| 20Mb Hardrive ECG | 1270.00 |
| 1640 + 32Mb Hardcard add | £300 |

### DESK TOP PUBLISHERS

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| Desktop Publisher + Mouse | 69.50 |
| Desktop Publisher | 27.50 |
| Newsdesk International + Mouse | 77.00 |
| Stop Press + Mouse | 77.00 |
| Fleet Street Editor | 59.95 |

### DATABASES

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| Tasword 8000 | 20.00 |
| Masterfile 8000 | 44.99 |
| Delta | 85.00 |
| **ALSO** | |
| Locomail | 25.00 |
| Supercalc | 44.00 |

### PPC

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| PPC 512S | 430.00 |
| PPC 512 | 522.00 |
| PPC 640S | 516.00 |
| PPC 640D | 610.00 |

### PC 1512

| | |
|---|---|
| Single Mono | 483.25 |
| Double Mono | 602.00 |
| Single Colour | 644.85 |
| Double Colour | 763.00 |

### PCW

| | |
|---|---|
| 8256 | 330.00 |
| 8512 | 430.00 |
| 9512 | 520.00 |

### PCW ACCESSORIES

| | |
|---|---|
| 1Mb Disk Drive Upgrade for all machines | 150.00 |
| RS 232 Interface For 8000 Series | 62.00 |

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### PRINTERS

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| Panasonic 1082 | 219.00 |
| Micro Peripherals 135 | 144.00 |
| Micro Peripherals 165 | 272.50 |
| Micro Peripherals 200 | 279.50 |
| Canon 1080A | 314.00 |
| Juki 6100 | 316.00 |
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| LQ500 | 425.00 |
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# THE GOOD SOFTWARE FILE



and the larger systems from MAP and Compact. But it's easier to run than the larger packages since all the software can be squeezed into the M drive. Good package for a small company.

PLUSES ● MINUSES
- ▲ Already set up for 8256 or 8512
- ▲ No need for pre printed stationery
- ▲ Excellent sort and search facilities
- ▲ Invoices shown on screen as you create them
- ▼ Constant need to input full five-digit account codes.
- ▼ No final accounts reports available on nominal ledger
- ▼ No facility to run the ledgers in different accounting periods.

## CAVALIER INSTALL

**£99.95 ● Load & Run ● 01-639 6683**

A comprehensive integrated package. Comprises 'Intact' accounts and 'Instock' stock control, available separately for £59.95 each. Well designed, easy to run and powerful enough for most businesses

PLUSES ● MINUSES
- ▲ Other packages (eg: 'Teleadd' address book) can be added
- ▲ Comprehensive range of features when used as a package
- ▲ Sophisticated pricing and order features in Instock section
- ▲ Flexible accounts, traps most mistakes, useful summaries
- ▲ Interesting forward planning facility in stock control
- ▼ Manual gives you a confusing number of options

## SMALL BUSINESS ACCOUNTS

**£69.95 ● NewStar ● 0277 220573**

Using the split-screen method, the prompt-driven program leads you through the hazards of double-entry book-keeping as painlessly as possible. Again, very useful demonstration files supplied with the program. It also handles VAT easily.

PLUSES ● MINUSES
- ▲ Excellent system of screen prompts
- ▲ Good demonstration files
- ▲ One of the easiest double-entry systems for the novice
- ▼ Manual is really for the PC

## MAP PAYROLL

**£49.00 ● MAP Systems ● 061 624 5662**

PLUSES ● MINUSES
- ▲ Can amend and re-run at any stage (even after printing)
- ▲ Cash analysis is broken down into departments
- ▲ System prevents re-use or amendment of leavers
- ▲ Can hold up to 48 standard hourly and weekly wage rates
- ▼ No SSP calculation facility (but can record amounts paid)
- ▼ Programs necessitate a lot of disc swapping
- ▼ No printed record of automatic tax code changes

## CAMSOFT PAYROLL

Easy to use

**£49.95 ● Cambrian Software ● 0766 831878**

PLUSES ● MINUSES
- ▲ Full payslip displayed on screen, any item can be amended
- ▲ Facility for freehand narrative on any payslip
- ▲ Uses M drive for programs to speed operation
- ▲ Built in on-screen help facility
- ▲ Search-sort routine for output to screen, printer or disc
- ▲ Uses alphanumeric employee codes
- ▼ Screen menus a bit untidy and sometimes difficult to follow
- ▼ No listing of cheques

## SAGESOFT POPULAR PAYROLL

**£69.95 ● Sagesoft ● 091 284 7077**

PLUSES ● MINUSES
- ▲ Any or all employees payroll can be rerun at any stage
- ▲ Full pay history available for all employees and leavers
- ▲ Calculates average pay for holidays etc
- ▲ Very easy to install
- ▼ Limited number of additions/deductions
- ▼ Doesn't print a list of cheques
- ▼ No analysis of additions/deductions

## SAGE ACCOUNTS

Best general buy

**£100.05 ● Sagesoft ● 091284 7077**

An integrated accounts package consisting of purchase, sales and nominal ledgers. For another £50 you can buy Accounts Plus which also has invoicing and stock control. Aimed at small companies with the emphasis on ease of setting up. But a number of limitations: eg, the package cannot cope too easily with rapidly increasing numbers of customers and suppliers.

PLUSES ● MINUSES
- ▲ Clean, tidy and logical screen layouts and menus
- ▲ Easy to set up and use with excellent documentation
- ▲ Good audit trails and VAT reports
- ▲ Can produce formatted trial balances
- ▼ Restrictive account numbering system
- ▼ Only single Nominal ledger and VAT analysis per item
- ▼ Does not cater for settlement discounts
- ▼ Won't print remittance advice slips
- ▼ Cramped on 9512 printer – need 17 pitch daisywheel

## COMPACT PAYROLL

**£99.95 ● Compact Software Ltd ● 0306 887373**

PLUSES ● MINUSES
- ▲ Supplied with test data
- ▲ Facility to change employees tax codes following budget
- ▲ Can run payroll for several companies
- ▲ Program available for PC compatibles – data transportable
- ▼ Must be run from the master discs
- ▼ Needs input form and check calculation for each employee
- ▼ Once payslips are printed nothing can be changed
- ▼ Most expensive payroll program

# • UTILITIES •

## DAATAFAX

**Basic Version £39.95 (with Microfile £49.95/with mouse £79.95) ● Kempston Data ● 0908 690018**

Used in conjunction with a personal ring-binder, it helps you to keep track of appointments, names, addresses etc. Also prints out data in a form that will fit the average personal organiser.

PLUSES ● MINUSES
- ▲ Easy to use
- ▲ Flexible to allow you to do what you want
- ▲ Generates diary pages – saves buying inserts
- ▲ Very useful for name and address organization
- ▲ Preparing the data needed can be very time-consuming
- ▼ Keeping everything up to date is tedious
- ▼ No particularly sophisticated features

## LOCOSCRIPT 2 FONTS

Useful

**£19.95 ● Locomotive Software (0306 740606) ● 8000s only**

Locomotive finally breaking out of the one-pattern print-out with eight new fonts. You can have up to ten styles available at any one time. New characters reproduced surprisingly well, seven or so extra styles can be bought separately.

PLUSES ● MINUSES
- ▲ You get eight new fonts one of which is free
- ▲ All accents and characters in any alphabet supported
- ▲ Very easy to use
- ▲ Cheap
- ▲ Can finally get out of that one-pattern print-out
- ▼ Can't mix styles in one document
- ▼ Reproduction is not excellent because of 16 dot limitations

## ORGMENTOR

**£19.95 (with binder £29.95) ● HPA Systems ● 08697 508**

Based on making the best of LocoMail (the LocoScript mailmerger), Orgmentor is a suite of programs to create a diary, and name and address file. It also has a task manager (or priority lister) and a money manager. Programs are usually run by merging a program with the latest datafile

PLUSES ● MINUSES
- ▲ Works in the familiar ground of LocoMail
- ▲ Task Manager forces you to think in an organized way
- ▲ Basic accounting facilities
- ▲ Flexible diary format
- ▼ A little complicated to work
- ▼ Needs LocoMail to use it
- ▼ No continuous paper with the package

## MOUSE AND DESKTOP

Useful

**£79.95 ● AMS ● 0925 413501**

A whole new way of using your PCW – banish CP/M for ever. For your money you get a mouse and software which emulates the GEM Desktop environment found on PCs. All commands are given by pointing to icons on the screen, not typing at the keyboard. You also get calculator/calendar (etc) utilities

PLUSES ● MINUSES
- ▲ A genuinely useful desktop organiser, with useful utilities.
- ▲ Well presented and easy to use.
- ▲ Makes CP/M commands easy
- ▲ The mouse can be used with a variety of other software
- ▼ Takes up a lot of space in the M drive
- ▼ Utilities not available while running other programs
- ▼ Can be irritating if you are proficient with CP/M

## LOCOKEY

**£14.95 ● Locomotive Software ● 0306 740606**

This successor to LocoChar is a keyboard customiser which means that any key can be made to produce any letter. At the touch of one button, the program will reproduce any one of the sixteen LocoChar-defined characters.

PLUSES ● MINUSES
- ▲ Enables customisation to any distribution of keyboard letters (ie, non-QWERTY keyboards)
- ▲ Handles any combinations of accent and character
- ▲ Works with LocoChar defined characters
- ▼ Will only be of limited use.

## SUPER TYPE II

**£24.95 ● Digita International ● 03954 5059**

A program for users of LocoScript (1 or 2) and CP/M programs, which modifies the fonts (ie, the look of the characters) used by the PCW printer. SuperType has 4 'business' fonts and 4 'novelty' fonts, like Olde English. It works by directly altering the relevant files for LocoScript or CP/M, so you only need run it once – after that, the new chosen font is automatically available.

PLUSES ● MINUSES
- ▲ Once install.ed, you can totally forget it's there
- ▲ Genuinely useful range of fonts available
- ▲ Works with LocoScript as well as CP/M
- ▲ All LocoScript's print size and style options still work
- ▲ Doesn't take up any extra disc space
- ▼ You can't mix different fonts in the same document

## MONEY MANAGER PLUS

Best general buy

**£39.95 ● Connect Systems Ltd ● 01 743 9792**

The souped-up version of the personal accounts package Money Manager which would serve a small business quite nicely. It acts as a daily diary, over 12 months, recording all incomings and outgoings between up to 9 accounts. Similar transactions can be grouped together, and simple reports can be printed. Money Manager also available for £24.95

PLUSES ● MINUSES
- ▲ Simple to use, need no accounts or computer knowledge
- ▲ Standing orders can be defined for each month
- ▲ Detailed and summary statements can be printed out
- ▲ VAT reports can be separated out
- ▲ Can present results as bar charts
- ▼ No audit trail integrity
- ▼ The statement format is not very flexible
- ▼ Transfers between accounts are not cross-referenced

## PERSONAL TAX PLANNER

Useful

**£25.95 ● Digita International ● 03954 5059**

Simple program which asks you all the questions relevant to your year's tax affairs, and prepares your tax return claim (or bill) Can, for example, find out whether married couples would be better assessed separately or not. Annual updates available.

# THE GOOD SOFTWARE FILE

## UTILITIES • DTP

PLUSES ● MINUSES
▲ Simple to use
▲ Needs a minimum knowledge of the tax law
▲ Forces you to keep your tax details in one place
▼ Limited application – might only use it once a year
▼ Can't handle unusual cases
▼ Program updates (for a new allowance level) cost £10

## THE KNIFE PLUS
**£19.95 ● Hisoft ● 0525 718181**

An essential tool for retrieving data from corrupted discs. Knife Plus will copy all uncorrupted sectors on to a fresh disc which you can then patch up without risking the original.
PLUSES ● MINUSES
▲ Copies all uncorrupted data from damaged discs
▲ If boot sector damaged, will copy good boot sector onto disc
▼ Requires some knowledge of basic disc structure
▼ Manual not written for beginners

## WISE ONE
**£34.95 ● Swallowsoft ● see below**

An expert system – you input rules and information and Wise One becomes an 'intelligent' program which can, for example, do simple diagnoses according to symptoms you type in. From PO Box 107, Walton on Thames, Surrey KT12 5PQ.
PLUSES ● MINUSES
▲ Power to be genuinely useful
▲ Elementary arithmetic
▲ Help screens can be set up for the user
▼ Obscure way of writing rules – need programming instinct
▼ Manual dry and academic

## SIGNWRITER
**£49.95 ● Wight Scientific ● 01 858 2699**

Prints out any string of text as a sign in a standard Roman font. Only limit on size of characters is the size of the paper and the quality is very good. Long messages can be printed lengthways on continuous paper. Extra fonts are available for £5
PLUSES ● MINUSES
▲ Good quality print – difficult to believe it's dot matrix.
▲ No limit on size of character
▲ Text can be boxed and underlined
▼ Signs take several minutes to print out
▼ You have to pay for extra fonts

## TAS-SIGN
**£29.95 ● Tasman Software ● 0532 438301**

Takes time to print out but you can print signs of up to five lines of text up to seven inches high with up to 32 characters in each. Four fonts, eight hatching patterns, and you can print lengthways on continuous paper for long signs.
PLUSES ● MINUSES
▲ Wide range of fonts and shadings
▲ Long signs will print out in 'landscape ' (sideways) format
▼ Long signs take time
▼ Some symbols (yen signs etc) won't print out on PCW

## DISC MATE
**£24.99 ● Siren Software ● 061 848 9233**

Disc Mate is a set of CP/M utility programs which bring complex disc recovery operations within the scope of CP/M novices. Facilities include recovering erased files and making files 'read only' (ie, unerasable).
PLUSES ● MINUSES
▲ Simple on-screen instructions once you've got started
▲ Allows easy recovery of accidentally erased files

## NEXT MONTH

**The guide continues with DATABASES, COMMUNICATIONS, EDUCATIONAL PACKAGES and PROGRAMMING. After that it's SPREADSHEETS, GRAPHICS and GAMES and the month after that it's back to this month's categories.**

**Our intention is to keep publishing the three parts of the guide in rotation, updating it each month to include all new products. If you would like to see other sections of the guide, back issues of 8000 Plus are available form our Somerton address at £1.75 each.**

**Meanwhile, if you are aware of any significant errors or omissions in the Files as published, please let us know. We want to maintain it as THE authoritative guide to PCW software.**

▲ 'ZIPDISC' program speeds up disc access by 10 to 20%
▲ Friendly file copying program in case you dislike PIP
▲ Can read both single and double density discs
▼ You'll need to understand CP/M basics

## JEEVES WITH KEMPSTON MOUSE
**£79.95 ● Kempston ● 0908 690018**

A 'desktop organiser' which lets you do the mundane functions of copying, deleting files etc, by icons and pointers – you use the mouse to move a pointer over the symbol for 'delete' such as a dustbin and then click a button on the mouse. Also has built in calendar, clock, calculator etc
PLUSES ● MINUSES
▲ Avoids a lot of dreaded CP/M commands
▲ Continuous time display
▲ Works from within SuperCalc, BASIC, dBase, WordStar, Cracker, Sage Accounts
▼ Problems if you try to run it with just about anything else
▼ Calculator, watch, notepad and calendar will cost you £5.

## WRITE HAND MAN
**£29.95 ● Hisoft ● 0525 718181**

This utility program sits in the background whatever you are doing – for example, if you are word processing, press the key and up pops a calculator, a notepad, or a diary. Designed to eliminate paper, but the more advanced functions (notepad) are so cumbersome they fail to be at all useful. Better to buy a £4.95 Casio calculator and a pencil and paper.

PLUSES ● MINUSES
▲ Results from calculator can be pasted directly onto files
▲ You can re-define the PCW keys to produce strings
▼ Manual is technical and incomprehensible
▼ Notepad functions are slow and cumbersome to use
▼ Takes up a lot of disc space and CP/M workspace

## ASTROCALC
**£15.50 ● Astrocalc ● 0442 51809**

A starter program for astrologers. More sophisticated programs to help the interpretation of the charts are also available
PLUSES ● MINUSES
▲ Takes the sweat out of creating natal charts
▲ Genuine astrological tool – not just a fake horoscope
▲ No graphical representation of the charts
▼ Tutorial section rather pointless

## BRAINSTORM
**£29.95 ● Brainstorm Software ● 0895 677845**

An 'ideas processor', Brainstorm is a computerized doodling pad. You can jot phrases down randomly, then organize them into a hierarchical plan, then expand each phrase into a finished idea, and finally print them out as a coherent document. If you find it easier to work at a keyboard than with a pencil and paper, this will really help you think.
PLUSES ● MINUSES
▲ Unlimited sub-levels of headings and sections
▲ You can output the rough text, for a wordprocessor to polish
▲ Provides a unique service, which should be useful to you
▼ Needs better graphics to let you browse the structure easily
▼ As a word processor, it is very primitive
▼ A notepad and a pencil would cost you £1 or less

# • DESK TOP PUBLISHING •

Desktop publishing – or DTP – packages enable you to produce your own newsletters using your PCW. They come with a variety of fonts of a range of sizes for headlines and body text and a selection of graphics to include in your creations

You read in your articles prepared by a word processor into text boxes. If you can't edit the text from within the program, you have to go back to your word processor to fine-tune the article to fit – this is very tedious. Then you put your graphics in graphics boxes, make up your headlines, and then lay out your publication on the PCW by juggling the position of your boxes on each page. Finally you can get a copy of each page on your printer (though not if it's a daisywheel, of course, as on the 9512) and photocopy the results.

Graphics can be taken either from the package itself or from TV/video via a digitiser.

The results won't be of sufficient quality to compete with the professionals, but for club and company newsletters, leaflets, posters and small publications, DTP could be invaluable.

## THE DESKTOP PUBLISHER
**£29.95 ● Database Software ● 0625 878888**

Tremendous value for money. Graphics and text boxes can be easily moved around and page layout is clear. You can edit text from within the program, using LocoScript-like commands to set bold and italics. Good range of fonts and graphics too, at half price of its rivals! Mouse optional for £50 more
PLUSES ● MINUSES
▲ Text editor allows you to edit articles to fit the space eally
▲ Boxes and general layout easy to manipulate
▲ Works with three mice, but fine with keyboard alone
▲ Halt the price of other packages
▲ Good range of fonts and graphics, and can design your own
▼ Can't fix size of text boxes – they expand to take all the text
▼ Headlines can look a bit jagged

## STOP PRESS
**£49.95 ● AMS ● 0925 413501**

An excellent DTP Package, very strong on graphics, very well designed, and once you get used to it, easy to use.
Sophisticated text handling features such as autoflow, but can't edit text – that all has to be done in your word processor before flowing the text in. A lot of good fonts supplied too
PLUSES ● MINUSES
▲ Excellent graphics facilities, good as any graphics program
▲ Wide range of text styles
▲ Menu and key commands system suits beginner and expert
▲ Text autoflow
▼ No text editing ability
▼ Some quirks in text handling – apostrophes, spacing, etc.

## NEWSDESK INTERNATIONAL
**£49.95 ● The Electric Studio ● 0462 675666**

Versatile package with a very wide range of graphics facilities and high quality headline text. Page make-up is flexible, though the program can be a bit cumbersome, mainly in text handling. Same graphics facilities as Electric Studio's 'Art' package
PLUSES ● MINUSES
▲ Good control over the elements on the page
▲ Powerful graphics facilities
▲ Good quality print in headlines and large fonts
▲ Can use font editor to create your own high quality fonts
▼ Text handling slow and cumbersome
▼ Not easy to undo mistakes

## FLEET STREET EDITOR PLUS
**£49.95 ● Mirrorsoft ● 01 377 4645**

The most versatile and powerful package. You can create template-like 'page dummies' if you use several pages of the same format, and handling of text, setting of margins and size of text boxes etc, is well controlled. Tends to stop working abruptly for no reason though and uses memory space extravagantly.
PLUSES ● MINUSES
▲ Versatile integrated package
▲ Text handling and editing sophisticated and controlled
▲ Can set up page dummies for regularly used formats
▼ Crashes occasionally
▼ Odd use of memory in text editor

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| Disc Manager | The most complete and Up to date collection of disc and file utilities available |
| Catalogue | We have a substantial library of PD Software for the PCW. Send SAE for catalogue |

HARTLAND

All software is Public Domain and has been tested on the Amstrad PCW. To obtain a copy of any of the above send a blank formatted disc plus £4 to cover copying, p&p, etc. Cheques should be made payable to HARTLAND.

10 Gains Road, Portsmouth, Hants. PO4 0PL.

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# Com-Stax

## THE ULTIMATE SPACE SAVER

*"interesting solution ..... interesting price" says 8000 Plus.*

The new Com-Stax 8 Series is a unique stand that will stack your PCW 8256 or 8512 plus your keyboard and printer in under a quarter of a square metre of floor space. Its reclining monitor position and angled keyboard make the PCW even more user friendly. The Com-Stax is 98 cm high, 41 cm wide and beautifully finished in durable red, white or black lacquer, the unit comes to you as a flat pack kit which is easily assembled in minutes with the allen key provided

## THE PRICE: £29.95

PLUS VAT £4.49 and P&P £3.75,
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Please allow 28 days for delivery. The Com-Stax is a Copyright design. Patent applied for

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Computer Supplies Ltd. **0707 52698** (5 lines)

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| R.,BL, GR, BR, Y | 4.90 | 4.60 |
| Carbon | 5.30 | 5.15 |
| DMP2000/3000/3160 | 2.80 | 2.60 |
| R.,BL, GR, BR | 3.80 | 3.60 |
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| R.,BL, GR, BR, Y | 6.50 | 6.20 |
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| 1166 | 90 | 1000 | 9.50 | – | – |
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| 1000 | 80 | 1000 | 11.90 | – | – |
| 2000 | 70 | 2000 | 20.50 | 19.25 | 18.30 |
| 1000 | 90 | 1000 | 13.90 | 12.85 | 11.90 |

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**Daisywheels for the 9512 £5.50 each** Please send for typeface sheet

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| **Protext Filer (Arnor):** address list & labler for Protext | £19.95 |
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# PICK OF THE MONTH

**Save £5 on these top PCW entertainment programs!**

## ■ HEAD OVER HEELS

The incredibly-animated program from Ocean in which you control TWO separate characters, using their different abilities to solve some mind-bending puzzles. Huge playing area and probably the best graphics on the PCW. Plus totally absorbing gameplay.
**Only £9.95!** (RRP £14.95)
**Order code 8007**

## ■ SCRABBLE

This will appeal to anyone who enjoys playing with words. A super enhanced dictionary and full board displayed on-screen means you get the full feel of this classic game. Play against friends or take the computer on. Can you beat your PCW at word processing?
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## ■ ACADEMY

*Academy, (*aka *Tau Ceti II, )* is a brilliant extension to the original theme of interplanetary space exploration which so startled the 8-bit world when it first appeared. In *Academy* you must graduate as a Skimmer Pilot, and to do this you must complete 20 missions, grouped in five levels of four, successfully. Combat skills and environmental understanding mean must both be completed to graduate. In *Academy* the graphics and control factors have been heightened to offer the PCW public a chance to enjoy computer gaming at a completely fresh level. You won't be disappointed!
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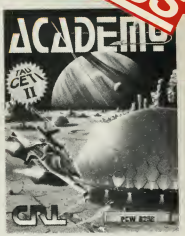


## ■ TETRIS

The first Russian game to reach the West has won rave reviews everywhere. All you have to do is guide blocks down the screen into complete rows on the bottom – but be warned it has a 'Just one more go' rating of 100 per cent!
**Only £14.99** (RRP £19.99)
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**9512 software:**
**The following titles do not run on the 9512: Tau Ceti; Head Over Heels; Tetris**

**HOW TO ORDER**
**Just fill in the order form on the left of this page. Or use our Access/Visa hotline on 0458 74011.**

# BARGAIN BUYS!!

## ■ LOCOSCRIPT 2 & AMSTRAD PCW'S £11.95 • Locomotive Software

Published by Sigma Press, this John Hughes book is a friendly, down-to-earth and readable guide to LocoScript 2. Whether you're an 8256 or 8512 user converting from LocoScript 1, or a brand new 9512 owner, this will tell you all you need to know. It covers the basics of layouts and tabs, LocoMail and LocoSpell, alternative printers and even gives you an introduction to the world of CP/M If you find the Amstrad manual a bit daunting, then this is for you!
**Order code 8036**

## ■ HACKERS HANDBOOK III by Hugo Cornwall • £6.95

There is no other book like this one! The gentle art of hacking is so new to our society that there have been numerous misconceptions about the hows, whos and what fors. Hugo Cornwall's book clears it all up, whilst also providing an exacting code which all hackers would do well to use as both map and compass. A Top 10 bestseller when it first came out, this new edition goes from first comms principles to networks, videotex, radio computer data - all written in entertaining prose that carries you along with the enthusiasm of discovery.
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The sweetest three piece you'll ever come across.

**Order Code 8005** (8256/8512), **8006** (9512)

## OFFICIAL BASIC MANUAL

**Only £9.95 – with FREE pack of highlighter pens!**

Your PCW system disc includes Mallard BASIC, an excellent version of the world's most-used computer language. But alas, the documentation is threadbare, and to fill this gap is the official 400-page Locomotive manual.

It covers all commands available in Mallard BASIC in full detail, plus a much expanded tutorial section intended to teach BASIC programming from scratch. Full coverage of the GSX graphics commands and the Jetsam filing system is also included.

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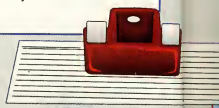
**Order Code 8004**



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The idea is simple – you use these higlighter pens to mark out any key text you want to stand out in a document. For £1.50 you get green, red and yellow 8000 Plus-stamped pens in a clear plastic wallet.

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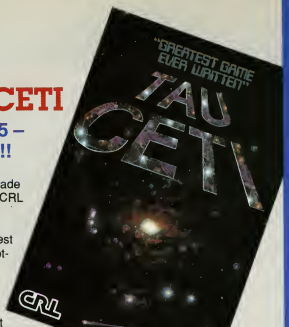
## Only £9.95 – save £10!!!




This graphic arcade adventure from CRL creates its own cosmology and combines the best features of shoot-'em-ups with intelligent gameplay.

This unique offer means that you can buy one of the best games yet on the PCW for just £9.95 – under half price!

Tau Ceti is set in 2140, on a planet whose defence systems are going wildly wrong. Your job is to sort out the situation before possible catastrophe.

You start off with a cunning adventure, and then launch into a stunning arcade sequence.

After a while, you'll realise just how much gameplay is in this game. It's a classic that breaks down the distinction between arcade and adventure gaming.

Play it – you won't be disappointed!

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## Packet of 20 for £1

(when ordered with another product)

Spare labels for your 3" discs in four different colours – yellow, green, red and blue. You get five of each colour when ordering with another item from Special Offers.

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# THE THINGI

## Only £7.50 (RRP £9.95)

One of the most durable accessories you're likely to purchase for your PCW comes in the shape of this clever piece of plastic which attaches with Velcro to the top of your computer, and allows you to read text without endless fiddling about and breaking your concentration every time you need to look at the paper to see what comes next. Saves hours on any reading task!

The Thingi comes in two versions – left- or right-sided. Please state either **Order Code 8002** (left-sided), or **8003** (right-sided) when ordering.

# Subscribe to the leading Amstrad PCW magazine and we'll send you free goods worth over £12!

YOU may find it interesting that 8000 Plus has one of the highest percentages of postal subscribers of any magazine in the UK. Which implies that you're very sensible, but you know that and you're intelligent enough to recognise flattery. It also means quite a lot to us, because we feel the PCW owner is a member of a tribe, and certainly is enthusiastic to his or her machine. And, hopefully, you use the magazine for a regular flow of tips, reviews and advice. It's the best way to keep properly in touch with the bubbling, constantly-changing PCW scene.

So here's your chance. Paying £17.95 for a year's subscription doesn't save much on newsstand prices. But you get your copy right from the printers to your doorstep – so no more frustrating searches for a newsagent who hasn't sold out.

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If you'd like a gift pack, but already have a subscription to 8000 Plus, you can buy the pack at a special discount price of £8.95. Just tick the relevant option on the form.

SPECIAL OFFERS

8000 PLUS

# STOP PRESS

**Only £74.99 (RRP £89.99)**

There are sensible fonts
AND THERE ARE EXOTIC FONTS
And of course the statutory Old English font
So Whatever You Want You will find
One to Suit -
And it doesn't quite fit you'd to opt
Or else Stretch it to fit

▲ Just some of the fonts available on AMS' Stop Press'

Desktop publishing – doing page makeup on your computer instead of the old cut-and-paste method – is the boom area of home computing. All the national dailies are switching over to DTP methods – and so are thousands of PCW owners, to produce newsletters and flyers.

Want to try your hand? The best developed DTP package for the Amstrad PCW range is now available from Future Publishing at an all-in price of £74.99. Stop Press's incredibly versatile and powerful software plus mouse will turn your PCW into a DTP machine.

The Swiss-made mouse is probably the best currently available and offers high resolution movement all over the screen. The software makes the best possible use of this sensitivity, featuring as it does a wide range of DTP facilities which would probably cost three times as much on higher-priced computers.

Just a few of the features are: -

- **14** different fonts supplied
- Type sizes from **9 to 96 points**
- **Clip art** ready made to insert into files
- Text entered **directly** or **imported** from word processor
- On-screen text formatting, including **autoflow** around a picture
- **Draw, spray or paint** - your own designs or those supplied
- Up to **nine columns** per page!
- Bold, italics, underline, reversed boxes
- Centering, ragged right and literal justification
- Prints up to **108 pages** in one go
- **Shape drawing** includes triangles, squares, cubes, circles and ellipses
- Compatible with **digitised pictures** from MasterScan, Electric Studio and the Rombo digitiser
- **9512 compatible** using an Epson compatible dot matrix printer

Altogether, this is a superb way of getting to grips with DTP. We don't expect to offer any other DTP package through these pages again, because we've held back until we were absolutely sure that this was the best deal. So here's your chance to get going.

Save £15 on the manufacturer's recommended retail price by placing an order with our mail order department (telephone 0458 74011)!

Newsletters, fanzines, posters, letter heads, leaflets, charts, graphic business reports, flyers... all are now within reach, allowing your imagination as much freedom as possible. And with Stop Press there's no better way into the world of DTP.

**Order Code 8023**

# POST SCRIPT

## A congress of concord, conflict and conciliation conditioned by a conscientious Ed.

Every month PostScript lets you have your say on PCW and world affairs; this month's subjects include cricket, racism, presbyopia and spreadsheets. Sociologists of the future will be basing their PhDs on Popular Technology on these pages. This is your chance to make history! Write to: *PostScript, 4 Queen St, Bath, BA1 1EJ.* Sorry, we can't answer queries personally – we're too busy writing 8000 Plus!

### What about the 9512 workers

COME ON 8000 Plus: I'm sure you're trying to wind us 9512 owners up. I have stuck faithfully with you ever since buying a 9512 six months ago (and three months before it). It's all very well sticking in little editorials now and again 'sorry this doesn't apply to 9512 owners'.....

.....so what does apply to us? I bought the 9512 for the excellent letter quality of its printer and its looks. I think the 8000 machines are UGLY. The manual tells us that the machine will support 250 dot matrix printers. That's great – but which one do I get.....?

In this months issue (July), you have an otherwise excellent article on the various DTP programs – all of them tagged 8000's ONLY. Surely the only thing which stops them being 9512 packages is the lack of dot matrix printer. So 8000 Plus, how about running an article recommending 'Dot Matrix and DTP' packages for our 'far superior' PCW. It seems to me that most of the DTP you received ran on '9 pin' printers only – I would have preferred to add a 24 pin machine to my set up. I would be producing a club newsletter, mostly 'text oriented' but with the ability to import pictures/graphics, possibly via a video digitiser.

So come on 8000 Plus – yours is the best PCW magazine on the market. Cater for ALL PCW owners. Before I start to swear and curse I will finish.

**Steve H.**
**Dyfed**

***8000 PLUS*** *You're right, you can use any of the DTP packages on a 9512 with a 9-pin Epson compatible dot matrix printer – sorry we didn't make this clear. A better dot matrix printer won't give you better printouts than a normal 8512 printer of course; you're limited by the definition of the software. And just for you, we're doing a special feature on 9512s next month.*

*You don't seem too keen on 8000s – I think few would agree that they're all ugly and inferior. Perhaps you have had a bad experience with one at some time? Seriously, it's surely just a matter of horses for courses – neither is 'better' than the other, it depends what you want to do.*

### Eyes sore

David Langford's mention of "The Leper's squint" prompts me to write. You have a very fine journal, and to prove my point let me say that I take four others as well and am about to cancel their regular delivery and retain only yours. I must confess however that part of the decision involves my limited availability of 'hours awake' for reading because of my geriatric vision. I must however on behalf of all the old timers of whom you are so proud (and I see that we have an 84 year old among us) plead with you not to print miniscule reproductions of screens full of data, especially in negative, from badly focussed photographs (See pages 58 and 59 of Issue 22). Even with a magnifying lens the example on page 58 takes some deciphering. Had the original been properly focussed it would still have not been easy on the eyes. Ask one of your older colleagues for an opinion. And I have a similar plea for the discontinuance within columns of text of spidery commands and example listings.

Let me say I appreciate that there is little you can do about advertisers who wish to waste their money on a difficult-to-read presentation.

**E J Davies**
**Harrogate**

I subscribe to 8000 Plus because I like to read it – all of it. I was therefore dismayed this month on turning to the Good Software File to find that the only packages I could read about with ease were those that you do not particularly recommend.

Your designers may be proud of the appearance of the page layout, but the producers of the software are, I am sure, not quite so happy.

So, please get rid of those obtrusive 'rubber stamps' and allow this gentle reader to access the information without resorting to the use of a strong light and a magnifying glass.

I also find the colour pictures of the screen print out on pp40/41 of the June issue extraordinarily difficult to read. Polaroid do a black and white film, the blocks would be cheaper to produce and efficient communication, surely your purpose in life, would be ensured much more painlessly.

**V G Liebrecht**
**London**

***8000 PLUS*** *Illegibility is very frustrating for writers and artists as well as readers and obviously we want to clear things up. Because of the convoluted way in which magazines are produced, it can crop up for complex reasons.*

*The rubber-stamping idea didn't work because the tints (ie. the darkness of shading) on them didn't come out to the intended percentage, for technical printing reasons beyond our control. Hopefully this can be put right in the future.*

*As for the spidery text, we put commands to be typed in Courier (`like this`) to make it stand out from the main text (which is Helvetica). If other readers are finding it difficult to pick out, we'd gladly try something else – perhaps Courier bold (`like this`)?*

*Screen shots are notoriously difficult to reproduce. If you take a screen dump, so much of the quality is lost in photographing it, reversing it out and then printing the result, that it can be indecipherable. Easy, you think, take a picture of the screen (not on Polaroid – the quality wouldn't be nearly good enough!).*

*Unfortunately this throws up fresh problems. When a picture is printed, it has to be 'screened' first, and this involves splitting it into a number of lines. These lines are spaced slightly out of sync with the lines which make up your PCW screen; the resulting screened picture comes out with swirls (due to interference between the two patterns) and is*

# POSTSCRIPT

*illegible. Our printers had, for the screen shots you mentioned, tried to alleviate this swirling by defocusing – making the shot even more illegible.*

*Fortunately after months of top-secret research, Future Publishing Developments has come up with a way of saving screens to disc and transferring them directly to the Macintoshes on which our pages are made up. Details of this are still classified for various reasons but, thanks to Future's Andy Wilton, you can see the improved results on pages 16 and 17 among others.*

## Out of steam?

What is happening to Locomotive Software? I recently bought Locofont to expand my PCW 8512's repertoire and found the manual a dreadful trial, not at all up to Loco's usual high standard.

It was wordy, confusing and frankly baffling in places. For example, it helpfully suggests storing the fonts on the Locospell dictionary disc, so they are copied automatically to the M drive when you start up. What it doesn't mention is that the Locospell manual insists the dictionary disc is formatted for the A drive, and hence there isn't enough room for the big dictionary and all the fonts on one side of the disc.

However, I formatted a disc for the B drive, put the big dictionary and the fonts on to it, and it seemed to work ok. Then I was faced with the problem of having only 4K left on the M drive!

The answer to that seems to be to store four or five of the most commonly used fonts in group 0 of the dictionary disc, where they are copied automatically to M to start-up, and to put the others in another group, copying them manually to M if and when they are needed.

**N J Carter**
**Streatham**

## Disgusted, Coatbridge

Can you explain to me why, in the article on Adventure Game writing in the July edition, the writer felt obliged after the choice of drinks made was Export Lager to insult your Scottish readers.

It would appear that even in these hi-tech days some stereotypes die hard. Obviously, this piece was written before the European Football Championships in Germany, when English supporters went on the rampage. Does that mean that every English football supporter is a hooligan? Of course not! Neither do all Scottish people drink Export Lager, have met Jimmy Shand or have friends in Glasgow who can drink twenty pints a night.

Next time your author is looking for a wally to insult he should look closer to home, in the mirror!

**Brian Nugent**
**Secretary, Scottish National Party, Coatbridge Branch**

***8000 PLUS*** *We're sorry that you chose to take offence at something that was clearly not meant to be serious (and not written by Pat Winstanley, author of the rest of the article, incidentally). Many of my best friends are Scottish, and only a few of them have no sense of humour.*

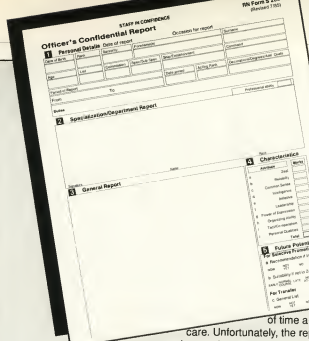
*Why do you assume that the author had to be a man? Women can write about computers too, you know. This is the sort of mindless sexism we can do without in these hi-tech days.*

## Mirror, mirror

Do you know if anyone has a program/package that enables one to create a grid and fill individual cells with symbols to create motifs which can be repeated, turned and mirrored? I am designing for canvas work, and it would save me a lot of eye-boggling work on graph paper if such a package could be found. It would also be helpful for anyone who designs knitwear or uses grid layouts.

**Jo Ings**
**Newport Pagnell**

***8000 PLUS*** *Stop Press, the graphics package from AMS available by amazing coincidence through our special offers, will do this.*




## Form report

Your magazine is excellent, and for a moment I thought the June 1988 "Tipoffs" feature entitled "Top Form" had at last answered my prayers. Alas, it was not to be!

Let me explain. I am the proud owner of an Amstrad 8512, and 90% of its employment is in assisting me at work to draft confidential reports on people – getting it right takes a great deal of time and care. Unfortunately, the reports have to be made on a special form – I enclose an example.

To date I have suceeded in making up a layout which, by careful use of Tab and line spacing settings, puts the right bits in the right boxes. If I take great care, it works, but it is laborious.

I am sure there must be a way, if I only knew how, of programming my Locomail to prompt me with the headings to each box, and then automatically moving the details entered to precisely the right position, so that they would tumble neatly into the correct box on printout (assuming I have lined the form up in the correct position in the first place). The article under "Tipoffs' does not really help, as the prompts "Name" , "Address", "telephone" etc would be printed out on the pre-printed form – just what I am trying to avoid!

**Alan C Bennett**
**Sherborne**

***8000 PLUS*** *First find the points in a blank document where each slot to be filled goes. Then put LocoMail commands at each point such as (+Mail) name (+Mail). Multi-line entries (eg. for addresses) can be put in using [RETURN]s for new lines and [ENTER] to finish the entry. (You will need a new layout at the beginning of each entry unless each line is to go against the left margin).*

*On 'filling' the document with F from the disc manager, LocoScript will prompt you with NAME? and so on the first time each item occurs. You type in the information requested and LocoMail will slot In the name automatically next time it occurs in the document. Insert your form, print out the document and there you have it.*

## Spitting in Protext

My PCW has just started spitting out Protext. It accepts various Locoscript and CP/M startup disks including those from the same batch as my Protext startup disc but just groans away for a bit before beeping at both my Protext startup and systems discs.

**Steve Nicholas**
**Reading**

***8000 PLUS*** *A disc formatted by Protext's DFORM or DFORMD can't be used as a startup disc – format it with DISCKIT instead. It sounds like this is your problem, though if your systems disc isn't working you're in more serious trouble.*

## Spreadsheets

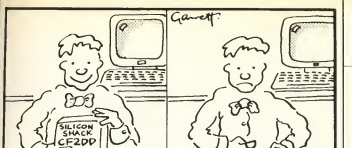
I know how spreadsheets work – I've struggled through the Mini Office one. But how can they be used? The Sunday Times says "The computer spreadsheet is probably the most useful program any business can possess...its applications are vast...it would be a very unusual company indeed which could not benefit.." and so on and flog a video on the subject for around £33. Which I can't afford and anyway would rather spend on 8000 Plus.

But I can't think of a single use for one! Well of course, a few piffling things like the example on the Mini Office suite. But something really useful? I would like to see a series on using spreadsheets to some real advantage. Or even a review of spreadsheets that are sold and how they can actually be used for some useful purpose? As opposed to your present limited reviews which perforce have to generalise. How you can use them as "probably the most useful program any business can possess"

**Murray Wren**
**London**

***8000 PLUS*** *Number one use for a spreadsheet is writing your own business accounts handling package – we're doing a series on how to do this at the moment. Other uses might be handling club sporting records (maintaining league tables etc.), balancing and updating your personal accounts, doing projections and estimates, handling VAT, doing mathematical and business modelling and simulations...*

Perhaps I can help Malcolm Ashton in your columns in the July editon of 8000 Plus – he wanted to know details of any cricket statistics




## Double trouble

I am desolated that I can no longer get CF2DD discs. This has made my B drive virtually useless.
**Philip Rhodes**
**Hants**

***8000 PLUS** Don't worry! CF2D discs are exactly the same as CF2DD discs, save for the extra 'D' on the label – just put your CF2D disc in the B drive and format it with DISCKIT as a 720k disc. Your PCW won't know any difference.*

programs.

I have been keeping statistics of local American Football clubs (I am a member of the British American Football Referees Association) on a spreadsheet. I have found this to be the only practical way of keeping sports statistics, and I would suggest to Mr Ashton that he uses this method, for the data he keeps can be updated, the format changed, and the whole printed out.

There are many books available from my local library which have sections on the use of spreadsheets with the PCW8256, and Mr Ashton will surely find something along the lines he needs.
**G Todd**
**Crawley**

***8000 PLUS** Just another application of the ever-useful spreadsheet.*

Can you please supply me with any information you may have, regarding software for golf club use. In particular for working out members handicaps, and also for scores and leaderboard results on competition days.
**W E Jones**
**Barnsley**

***8000 PLUS** Ah! Sounds like an ideal job for a spreadsheet.*

## Ironic columns

Having obtained some back numbers of 8000 Plus I have made use of Mr Hepworth's ingenious program for printing documents in two columns, and found it to work very well. But is there any way in which a document having been converted in this way can then be inserted into a new Locoscript document, thus making possible the printing of "headlines" going right across the page, while the main document remains in two columns?
**Rev Peter Beale**
**Salisbury**

***8000 PLUS** Assuming you want columns for a desktop published magazine or newsletter, the easiest way to get columns is, ironically, to avoid desktop publishing – ie. do a normal width headline and then your text as one long column. Print the result, cut and paste (literally) it on to a page and photocopy it or get stencils cut for your duplicator. The alternative is to get a desktop publishing program.*

## Index fingered

I feel it would be very useful if there were a much more detailed monthly index containing software items reviewed (not just suppliers) as well as main tip-off and listings subject-headings. The current headings used in the magazine may be witty but are not actually very useful when trying to find a particular item within a dense letter or tip-off page or a pile of 10 issues. I have thought of creating my own magazine data base but it would seem a very good idea if 8000+ and other magazines could do this as part of the service to the reader.

Secondly, I recently purchased Masterpaint and was surprised to find that with a little browsing through the various suppliers in 8000 Plus, I could have saved up to £5 by buying from another source. This also seems true of other software. Why is there such a discrepancy in prices? Are the cheaper versions likely to be in some way inferior? Small competitive price differences are to be expected but some DTP packages differ in price by up to £15 to £20. Surely such differences cannot be justified?

I am also thinking of buying Stop Press or some other major DTP package and find, to may surprise, that most features of Masterpaint are actually contained within the larger packages. Database software actually advertise the 'compatibility' of their Masterpaint program with other DTP programmes but fail to reveal that other DTP programs actually make Masterpaint redundant – why does 8000 Plus support this exploitative marketing?
**Barry Hill**
**Bristol**

***8000 PLUS** A detailed monthly index would, I think, be overkill, but we'll be publishing a yearly index in next month's second anniversary issue with all those ttpoffs, reviews, and listings from the previous twelve months. (Issue 12 had an index of the first eleven 8000 Pluses). Juken Enterprises of Southampton run an indexing service for 8000 Plus – details from 0703 769123.*

*Cheaper versions of a program sold from mail order companies will be exactly the same as the more expensive versions sold in High Street computing stores. The difference goes towards the High Street stores' rent and staff wages and suchlike. Of course if something goes wrong with the package or you want advice you're more likely to get help from the High Street store, so it's swings and roundabouts.*

## Workdesks

Following your article in this months 8000+ on hardware for the Amstrad and considering the cost of workdesks, I decided to design my own and I have enclosed a picture and plan of the design. The total cost came to about £13 and so I thought this would be of interest to other readers.

The main part of it was a second hand television stand, obtained from my local GRANADA televison rental shop in Ruislip for £2. The bolts, sheet dural, conti-board and softwood came from a local hardware store. All the sizes of the quoted depend upon the size of television stand obtained and computer, keyboard and books, the middle shelf can take the dot matrix printer and the bottom shelf is for the paper. The main advantage of this type of workdesk is that the computer can be transported from room to room quickly and efficiently.
**G Fenning**
**Pinner**

## Screen jest

I don't think you need those VDU anti-glare screens. I use a pair of polaroid sun glasses no problem.
**John Allen**
**South Sheilds**

## 920k disc?

When all the documents on any given Drive A disc had been copied onto a Drive B disc, that original drive A disc was re-formatted in Drive B, and used to receive documents from another Drive A disc. The usual message for dire warning was read note: if you continue then all files on this disc will be permanently destroyed! After a double-check, I proceeded with the re-format, which I understood formatted both sides of the disc in Drive B. But such seems not to be the case.

I placed in Drive A a disc reformatted on Drive B and with about 300K of files transferred to it, but with side 2 towards the screen. Drive A accepted this as a single-density disc with a maximum capacity of 173K, and more surprising all the original side 2 files were still there, unerased, and with their group titles!

1. How can this be?
2. How can I erase those unwanted documents (especially the group names)?

Why do files take up more space on a drive B disc (or in drive M) than they do on a drive A disc? A 3K drive A file becomes a 4K drive B file. A 63K group of files on A becomes a 74K group by the time it reaches Drive B. This tends to reduce substantially the benefits of having a high-density drive.
**Dr T R Allin**
**Stevenage**

***8000 PLUS** You haven't got a 920k disc! All that has happened is that the **directory** information for the old 180k disc is still there – despite being listed on the disc manager screen, the files themselves have effectively been wiped. If you try to access one of the files – to erase it, to copy it or edit it – you'll get an error message. Just carry on using your disc in the B drive and the spurious information will eventually be wiped off too.*

*Files on a 'drive B' disc are stored in blocks of 2k rather than 1k because the format is double density – 2k now takes up the same physical space on the disc as 1k used to. This is how you get the 'something for nothing' doubling of storage space on a disc. It follows that, as you point out, for lots of small files (eg ones*

*containing one name and address each) you have the same number of files on the B disc taking up twice the space they would take on an A disc, thus occupying the same proportion of available space!*

## Hard wear

As a newcomer to computing, I would like to know if the PCW 8256 will ever wear out. How are you supposed to treat it? If it is used several times daily, in the morning, then again in the afternoon and finally in the evening with gaps of an hour or two in between, should it be switched off each time and then re-booted for each subsequent session?

There is nothing in the manual on this and Dixons have no thought on the subject. Will the equipment therefore suffer if it is kept switched on all day and every day that it is likely to be used?
**Ray Howard**
**Bourne, Lincs**

***8000 PLUS*** *The first things to go will be the moving parts – the disc drives and keyboard for example. There's not much you can do about that. As for the insides, the worst thing seems to be changes in temperature (which cause expansions and contractions of soldered joints). Avoid switching it on and off every hour or so; the best thing is to switch it on in the morning and switch it off at night, even if you don't use it for periods of a few hours meantime. Your POW only uses as much electricity as a light bulb.*

## DTP

I've been in the the game of producing pages since the days of hot metal and have now attained the dusty pinnacle of being head reader of a large establishment. Which means I look upon desktop publishing packages with an informed eye.

After much research, mainly guided I must say by your pages, I decided the best choice was to buy the Desk Top Publisher to run on my 8512. This I've not regretted in any way. But on viewing other packages (whilst seeing differences of approach and function) I see considerable ease in operating any of them.

It seems to me that the very people who need the greatest assistance – those unfamiliar with the hard-worked rules of page make-up and spacing – are not helped. This is probably because not many, if any, of the software writers have real composing room experience.

It has been my experience that those operating DTP with identical packages ask me how I achieve this or that effect, assuming I have a greater knowledge of both the computer and the software – which just isn't the case. It seems clear to me that in fact the only difference lies in the printing database in my brain!

I am sure that if you were to ask my colleagues in the printing game who are equipped with the respective packages you reviewed what points they have to make on the particular package it would be infinitely more helpful to the amateur compositors trying their best.

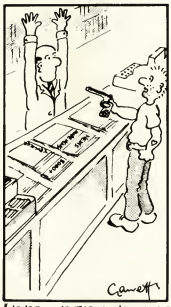
When I have assisted others who've bought DTP I have found little need to clarify the workings of that particular software, but a great need to explain the rules which my industry has developed over the centuries. I'm sure that is generally the case.

One rule which the rush to electronic publishing has tended to ignore is that it is inadvisible to allow he who originated the keystrokes to check them! I often see errors in your own columns which I'd say have a source in that area (though less so in your pages than others!) So it is a point worth considering.
**D Williams**
**London**

***8000plus*** *If only we coudlk havea a full-time 800 Plus proofr4eader!*

## You mean burglar

We are all apt to complain when the standard of instruction manuals




'NEVER MIND THE MONEY—JUST HAND OVER THE 8000 PLUSES'

falls below (or never reaches up to) that which we expect of them. But their shortcomings are overlooked when, suddenly we are deprived.

This happened to me recently when my car was broken into one night, the thief being after my radio; I suppose that on the off-chance of credit cards or other items being there, he grabbed my briefcase. But all he got was a stack of papers of use to nobody but me.

That was bad enough, but about a month later I needed to check out some details from a manual. Ye Gods! Mini-Office Professional. Protext and worst of all – 8000 Plus, latest copy, all gone.

I have rectified the last item (being the first I noticed missing), but I anticipate a little difficulty in persuading the makers of the other two that I am not just pirating.
**Ron Grace**
**Epsom**

***8000 PLUS*** *I'm sure if you write to the software companies explaining what's happened and giving your registration number (of the program, not the car they were stolen from) they'll be able to help.*

## BASIC checker

Your answer to Mr King's problem with the Basic Checker program (8000 Plus, June 1988) was fine as far as it went, but there was a second undetected error in his listing that you had not dealt with. He had typed CHR$(149)=" " instead of CHR$(149)+" ". You explained why the checker was not picking up the double space, but ignored the "+" and "=".

There is an extra category of error ignored, besides spaces and whether letters are upper or lower case, *every seventh letter* can be anything at all, without affecting the checksum. The checker uses the expression (y%-32)*(j%MOD7)+1 to calculate the checksum; y% is the ASCII value of each character in turn, and j% is the position of the character on the line. If j% is a multiple of 7 then (j%MOD7) is zero, so the ASCII value of the the character is multiplied by zero – and hence makes no contribution to the checksum, whatever the letter concerned. It follows that, in effect, every seventh letter is not checked! Sure enough, Mr King's "=" is the 42nd character on the line (excluding spaces) and so would not be checked.

The solution to this is simple – move the ")" in the BASIC checker two places to the right, so that (j%MOD7+1) is never zero. The modified checker would, however, give a different checksum from the original.

Am I the only 8000 Plus reader driven to check the checker in a desperate attempt to discover why a listing would not run? Or does everyone else type every seventh letter correctly!
**P Crane**
**Warrington**

## Errors in Mallard BASIC

The following errors have caused me considerable frustration recently, so, to prevent others from suffering likewise, here are the details:

*VAL command*

Most non-numeric characters yield a zero result but if such a text string being evaluated ends with &, +, - or . a 'TYPE MISMATCH' error occurs and the program stops or takes the 'ON ERROR' path. As the zero and hyphen keys are adjacent, the problem is not that unlikely to occur. There is no optimum solution to suit all circumstances but one way around it is to make the VAL into a subroutine then, in the ON ERROR processing, RESUME NEXT if error code (ERR) 13 occurs in that subroutine's line number (ERL).

*Open Command*

The manual states that a random file's record length must be minimum 1, but it doesn't warn that this is not validated and that the machine will totally freeze with the disc left whirring if a value of zero is inadvertently used. When using a variable for the length, check it for non-zero content immediately before the OPEN command just in case the content has been changed accidentally or the wrong variable name has been specified, and so avoid the agonising decision between switching the power off with a disc in the drive or extracting a disc when the motor is running.
**Malcolm Surl**
**Bodmin**

## Group action

I have just spent a most frustrating forty minutes copying LocoScript groups into M in order to transfer them onto a variety of discs. Is it possible to undertake a single action which will copy a group with one press of a key instead of f3, copy file, move, enter, back to the group for the next one etc...etc.
**D Taylor**
**Isleworth**

***8000 PLUS*** *Not from within LocoScript. You have to run up CP/M and use PIP with commands like* `PIP M:{g2}=A:*.*{g3}` *(to copy all files from group 3 of the A drive to group 2 of the memory) and* `PIP A:{g7}=M:*.*{g2}` *(to shove all files from group 2 of the memory to group 7 of the A disc).*

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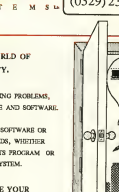

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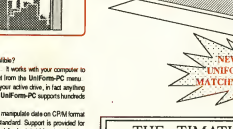

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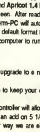

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